

## Intent of the course

A reminder of my purpose: To arm you for interactions with

- schoolteachers,
- lawyers,
- writers,
- poets,
- journalists,
- editors,
- nitpickers . . .

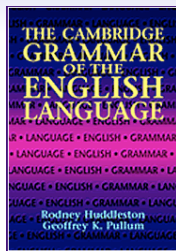
## Hopes for the course

My hope is that almost every class day you will encounter. . .

- at least some new presentation of well-known facts — simple enough use in even the most elementary grammar course;
- at least some facts you had not previously noticed;
- at least one basic area of English grammar where traditional accounts get the analysis completely wrong;
- at least one area where currently popular syntactic theories have taken a wrong turn;
- at least one entertaining piece of prescriptive poppycock — and information on how to knock it soundly on the head.

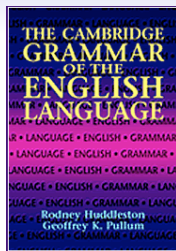
## The éminence grise

Background: the work of Rodney Huddleston,  
and *The Cambridge Grammar of the  
English Language* (CGEL)

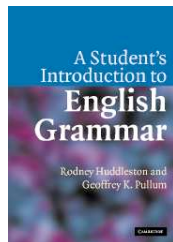


## The éminence grise

Background: the work of Rodney Huddleston, and *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language (CGEL)*



The course text: *A Student's Introduction to English Grammar (SIEG)* — the most helpful guide to *CGEL* that Huddleston and I could pack into 300 pages.



## Plan for the next couple of classes

- Verbs and the AUXILIARY/LEXICAL distinction
- The verbal inflectional system
- The **Dependent-Auxiliary** analysis and its failings
- The **Catenative-Auxiliary** analysis
- Infinitival clauses

# What verbs are

The sad result of teaching that verbs are “action words”




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## What verbs are

The sad result of teaching that verbs are “action words”

PHRASE	GOOGLE HITS
"faith is a verb"	116,000
"God is a verb"	1,150,000
"loyalty is a verb"	26,500
"marriage is a verb"	79,800
"mathematics is a verb"	106,000
(etc. etc.)	

Frightening. But this is where the traditional teaching of grammar has led us.

# Lexical and auxiliary verbs

Two **syntactic** classes of verbs (they are not semantic!):

- A special subsets, the **auxiliary** verbs
- The rest, called the **lexical** verbs

**Warning: The traditional definition of auxiliary verbs as 'helping verbs' is **toxic!** Stay away from it!**

(In *CGEL* terms: it overlooks the **non-core** uses of auxiliaries.)

# English verb inflection

First, the utterly alien paradigm of **be**:

## PRIMARY FORMS

	NEUTRAL			NEGATIVE		
	1st sg	3rd sg	other	1st sg	3rd sg	other
present	<i>am</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>aren't</i>	<i>isn't</i>	<i>aren't</i>
preterite	<i>was</i>		<i>were</i>	<i>wasn't</i>		<i>weren't</i>
irrealis	<i>were</i>		—	<i>weren't</i>		—

## SECONDARY FORMS

plain form	past participle	gerund-participle
<i>be</i>	<i>been</i>	<i>being</i>

# English verb inflection

The **wrong wrong wrong** way to describe regular verbs:

## PRIMARY FORMS

	NEUTRAL			NEGATIVE		
	1st sg	3rd sg	other	1st sg	3rd sg	other
present	<i>fill</i>	<i>fills</i>	<i>fill</i>	<i>don't fill</i>	<i>doesn't fill</i>	<i>don't fill</i>
subjunctive	<i>fill</i>	<i>fill</i>	<i>fill</i>	<i>not fill</i>	<i>not fill</i>	<i>not fill</i>
preterite	<i>filled</i>	<i>filled</i>	<i>filled</i>	<i>didn't fill</i>	<i>didn't fill</i>	<i>didn't fill</i>
past subjnc.	<i>filled</i>	<i>filled</i>	<i>filled</i>	<i>didn't fill</i>	<i>didn't fill</i>	<i>didn't fill</i>

## SECONDARY FORMS

plain form	past participle	gerund-participle
<i>fill</i>	<i>filled</i>	<i>filling</i>

## English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

The six paradigmatic forms that need to be recognized to describe a regular lexical verb like *fill*:

PRIMARY	<i>filled</i>	preterite
	<i>fills</i>	3rd singular present
	<i>fill</i>	plain present
SECONDARY	<i>fill</i>	plain form
	<i>filling</i>	gerund-participle
	<i>filled</i>	past participle

## English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

The distinction between **finite** and **non-finite** clauses ALMOST BUT NOT QUITE aligns with the distinction between **primary** and **secondary** verb inflectional forms:

VERB FORM	CONSTRUCTION	CLAUSE
PRIMARY	<i>I am kind.</i>	FINITE
PLAIN FORM	IMPERATIVE <i>Be kind.</i>	
	SUBJUNCTIVE <i>that I be kind</i>	
	INFINITIVAL <i>for me to be kind</i>	NON-FINITE
GERUND-PPL.	<i>being kind</i>	
PAST-PPL.	<i>been kind</i>	

## English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

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# English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

But not all forms have different shapes:

PRIMARY	<i>fill</i> <i>ed</i>	preterite
	<i>fill</i> <i>s</i>	3rd singular present
	<i>fill</i>	plain present
SECONDARY	<i>fill</i>	plain form
	<i>fill</i> <i>ing</i>	gerund-participle
	<i>fill</i> <i>ed</i>	past participle

## English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

It is easy to see that the preterite and the past participle must be distinguished: for some verbs, such as **write**, they have distinct shapes:

*The bishop has now written his sermon.*

\**The bishop has now wrote his sermon.*

\**Yesterday the bishop written his last sermon.*

*Yesterday the bishop wrote his last sermon.*

Treating the preterite and the past participle as the same thing would be impossible for these verbs.

## English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

The defective verb *beware* may provide crucial evidence for the distinction between plain present and plain form, since it seems to lack the former:

3rd sing present *	gerund-participle *
plain present *	plain form <i>beware</i>
* preterite	* past participle

But: Georgia Green once suggested that cases like <sup>?\*</sup> *I always beware of their dog* could be attributed to a pragmatic condition about expression of a (possibly implicit) warning.

# English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

There are actually **no verbs with exactly 6 shapes**.

Some irregular verbs (with past participle identical to plain form) have just 3 shapes for the 6 paradigm forms:

3rd sing present <i>hits</i>	gerund-participle <i>hitting</i>
plain present	plain form
<i>hit</i>	
preterite	past participle

# English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

Regular verbs, like **bake**, have 4 shapes for the 6 paradigm forms:

3rd sing present <i>bakes</i>	gerund-participle <i>baking</i>
plain present <i>bake</i>	plain form <i>bake</i>
preterite <i>baked</i>	past participle <i>baked</i>

# English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

Several dozen verbs with irregular past participle suffixes, like **take**, have 5 shapes for 6 paradigm forms:

3rd sing present <i>takes</i>	gerund-participle <i>taking</i>
plain present <i>take</i>	plain form <i>take</i>
<i>took</i> preterite	<i>taken</i> past participle

# English verb inflection

Never forget just how confusing irregular verb inflection is.

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# English verb inflection

The disastrous threesome *lie/lie/lie*, *lie/lay/lain*, and *lay/laid/laid*:

PRIMARY	plain present	<i>lie</i>	<i>lie</i>	<i>lay</i>
	3rd sg present	<i>lies</i>	<i>lies</i>	<i>lays</i>
	preterite	<i>lied</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>laid</i>
SECONDARY	plain form	<i>lie</i>	<i>lie</i>	<i>lay</i>
	gerund-participle	<i>lying</i>	<i>lying</i>	<i>laying</i>
	past participle	<i>lied</i>	<i>lain</i>	<i>laid</i>
	MEANINGS:	“fib”	“recline”	“deposit”

## English verb inflection: LEXICAL VERBS

And never forget exactly why it is that *faith* is **not** a verb:

PLAIN PRESENT	<i>We smile.</i>	* <i>We faith.</i>
3SG PRESENT	<i>He smiles.</i>	* <i>He faiths.</i>
PRETERITE	<i>We smiled.</i>	* <i>We faithed.</i>
PLAIN FORM	<i>We can smile.</i>	* <i>We can faith.</i>
PAST PARTICIPLE	<i>He has smiled.</i>	* <i>He has faithed.</i>
GERUND-PARTICIPLE	<i>He is smiling.</i>	* <i>He is faithing.</i>

The right definition of ‘verb’ is that the verbs are the words that (broadly speaking) behave grammatically like *smile*, not like *faith*.

## Lexical and auxiliary verbs

Now for the auxiliary verbs. These are distinguished by certain special properties, the '**NICE**' properties:

- N** Special **N**egation syntax, preceding clause-negating *not* (*He is not in*), and special **N**egation morphology with the *·n't* suffix (*He isn't in*).
- I** Takes **I**nitial ('Inverted') position in **I**ndependent polar **I**nterrogatives (etc.): *Do you love me?*
- C** Special '**C**ode' interpretation of **C**omplement omission: taken to be ellipsis (*Yes, you are* [—])
- E** Special **E**mphasis phonology — heavy stress signals **E**mphasized polarity (*But you **cán** help!*)

# English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

We saw earlier that **be** overcrowds the chart with extra forms:

3rd sing present <i>is(n't)</i>	gerund-participle <i>being</i>
plain present <i>am ~ are(n't)</i>	plain form <i>be</i>
<i>was(n't) ~ were(n't)</i> preterite	<i>been</i> past participle

Here the negative forms really need a separate column. . .

# Adding a column for the negative forms

Illustrating with the primary forms of the auxiliary *do*:

3rd sg pres neutral <i>does</i>	3rd sg pres negative <i>doesn't</i>
plain present neutral <i>do</i>	plain present negative <i>don't</i>
preterite neutral <i>did</i>	preterite negative <i>didn't</i>

## English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

This is necessary because the negative forms really are words, not word sequences.

(Zwicky & Pullum, 'Cliticization versus inflection: English *n't*', Language 59 [1983], 502-513)

Key syntactic evidence: single word inversion in interrogatives

<i>I should go.</i>	<i>Should I go?</i>	[ <i>should</i> is a word]
<i>I shouldn't go.</i>	<i>Shouldn't I go?</i>	[ <i>shouldn't</i> is a word]
<i>I should've gone.</i>	* <i>Should've I gone?</i>	[ <i>should've</i> isn't a word]
<i>I oughta go.</i>	* <i>Oughta I go?</i>	[ <i>oughta</i> isn't a word]

## English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

For the non-modal auxiliary verb **have** (the one that expresses perfect tense), the paradigm is the same as its transitive lexical verb counterpart, except for the additional negative primary forms, and the fact that it has no past participle:

PRIMARY		SECONDARY
3rd sg pres neutral <i>have</i>	3rd sg pres negative <i>haven't</i>	gerund-participle <i>having</i>
plain present neutral <i>have</i>	plain present negative <i>haven't</i>	plain form <i>have</i>
preterite neutral <i>had</i>	preterite negative <i>hadn't</i>	past participle NOT USED

# English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

Auxiliary **do** is similar, except there are no grounds for saying it has a gerund-participle or a plain form, so no secondary forms of it are ever found:

## PRIMARY

3rd sg pres neutral <i>does</i>	3rd sg pres negative <i>doesn't</i>
plain present neutral <i>do</i>	plain present negative <i>don't</i>
preterite neutral <i>did</i>	preterite negative <i>didn't</i>

## SECONDARY

gerund-participle NOT USED
plain form NOT USED
past participle NOT USED

## English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

The modal auxiliary verb **will** has one less distinction than auxiliary *do* — there is no distinct 3rd singular present; moreover, its secondary forms **do not exist**, even where the syntax would apparently permit them (so we put an asterisk in the chart of forms):

PRIMARY		SECONDARY
present neutral <i>will</i>	present negative <i>won't</i>	gerund-participle *
preterite neutral <i>would</i>	preterite negative <i>wouldn't</i>	plain form *
		past participle *

# English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

The modal **may** is defective (for most speakers today) in yet one more form (the present negative):

## PRIMARY

present neutral <i>may</i>	present negative *
preterite neutral <i>might</i>	preterite negative <i>mightn't</i>

## SECONDARY

gerund-participle *
plain form *
past participle *

# English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

**Must** is even more defective: it has no preterite. So it has a really sparse inflectional paradigm:

## PRIMARY

present neutral <i>must</i>	present negative <i>mustn't</i>
preterite neutral *	preterite negative *

## SECONDARY

gerund-participle *
plain form *
past participle *

## English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

The data on the modals ***dare*** and ***need*** are extraordinarily complex.

The modals are **non-affirmative polarity** items, never used to make positive assertions.

They are paralleled by lexical verbs with the same spelling and the same meaning, and there are signs of crossover — cases where native speakers have confused the two and use the complementation of one with aspects of the syntax of the other.

## English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

This is probably the right array of data for modal **dare**:

*No one dare tell him.* [present neutral]

*We daren't tell him.* [present negative]

*No one dared tell him.* [preterite neutral]

\* *We daredn't tell him before.* ← [no preterite negative]

[\*] *Not daring tell him, we left.* ← [no gerund-participle]

*I thought no one would dare tell him.* [plain form]

[\*] *No one has dared tell him yet.* [past participle]

The examples marked '[\*]' are identical to grammatical strings that have the lexical verb **dare**.

# English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

So the paradigm seems to be this:

## PRIMARY

present neutral <i>dare</i>	present negative <i>daren't</i>
preterite neutral <i>dared</i>	preterite negative *

## SECONDARY

gerund-participle *
plain form *
past participle *

## English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

The modal **need** is similar. The data seem to be as follows:

*No one need tell him.* [present neutral]

*We needn't tell him.* [present negative]

\* *No one needed tell him.* ← [no preterite negative]

\* *We neededn't tell him.* ← [no preterite negative]

\* *Not needing tell him, we left.* ← [no gerund-participle]

\* *I thought no one would need tell him.* [plain form]

\* *No one has needed tell him yet.* ← [no past participle]

(If *I thought no one would need tell him* seems grammatical to you, it might be because you accept bare infinitival complements with lexical **need**.)

# English verb inflection: AUXILIARY VERBS

So the paradigm is just that of a normal modal verb:

## PRIMARY

present neutral <i>need</i>	present negative <i>needn't</i>
preterite neutral *	preterite negative *

## SECONDARY

gerund-participle *
plain form *
past participle *

## English verb inflection

Finally, one more look at the paradigm of **be**  
(known as 'the copula'):

### PRIMARY FORMS

	NEUTRAL			NEGATIVE		
	1st sg	3rd sg	other	1st sg	3rd sg	other
present	<i>am</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>aren't</i>	<i>isn't</i>	<i>aren't</i>
preterite	<i>was</i>		<i>were</i>	<i>wasn't</i>		<i>weren't</i>
irrealis	<i>were</i>		—	<i>weren't</i>		—

### SECONDARY FORMS

plain form	past participle	gerund-participle
<i>be</i>	<i>been</i>	<i>being</i>

This verb came from outer space.

## Lexical and auxiliary verbs

Certain special properties, the **'NICE'** properties, distinguish lexical from auxiliary verbs:

- N** Special **N**egation syntax, preceding clause-negating *not* (*He is not in*), and special **N**egation morphology with the *·n't* suffix (*He isn't in*).
- I** Takes **I**nitial ('Inverted') position in **I**ndependent polar **I**nterrogatives (etc.): *Do you love me?*
- C** Special '**C**ode' interpretation of **C**omplement omission: taken to be ellipsis (*Yes, you are* [—])
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# Lexical and auxiliary verbs

## NON-CORE AUXILIARIES

The NICE properties are found with certain **non-core** uses of auxiliaries. Illustrating just with inversion:

Is *he* [<sub>PP</sub> *in?*]

Have *you* [<sub>NP</sub> *any idea?*]

Would *you rather* [<sub>Clause</sub> *I didn't?*]

**The underlined verb is not ‘helping’ any main-clause lexical verb!**

These items invert, but take PP or NP or full tensed Clause complements (bracketed).

If the underlined words are in ‘Aux’, what is head of VP?