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BY

KUNDAN SIR

SSC · BANKING · RAILWAY · BPSC · UGC NET · TEACHING EXAMS

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Tap any chapter to jump straight to it. Every chapter ends with 20 MCQs, an answer key and "Why this answer?" explanations.

★ How to Use This Book

Each chapter is built in the same order, so you always know where to look: **rule → table → example → common errors → practice test**. Learn the colour code once and you can revise any page in seconds.

✗ Red text
An **incorrect** sentence — the kind examiners put in error-spotting questions.

✓ Green text
The **correct** version. Read the red and the green together.

★ **Exam point**
A rule that is asked again and again — learn it by heart.

ⓘ **Tip / Note**
A memory trick, an exception or a quick clarification.

⚠ **Avoid this error**
A very common mistake, with the correct form.

Dark box
A **rule** or **structure** (formula) — the heart of the topic.

A 4-STEP STUDY PLAN

1. **Read** the chapter once, slowly, with the tables.
2. **Watch** the matching video lecture (QR code at the front of the book).
3. **Solve** the 20 MCQs without looking at the key.
4. **Check** the answer key and read "Why this answer?" for every question you got wrong — then revise only that section.

★ **Exam point** Most grammar questions in SSC, Banking and Railway papers come from four chapters: Subject–Verb Agreement, Tense, Articles and Prepositions. Revise them twice.

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CHAPTER ONE

01

Noun

A complete, exam-oriented guide to naming words — types, number, gender, case & usage

KUNDAN SIR

FOR SSC · BANKING · RAILWAY · BPSC · UGC NET · TEACHING EXAMS

ENGLISH GRAMMAR · MODULE 1

01 Noun

> *"Everything you can see, touch, feel, think of, or name is a noun. Master the noun, and you have laid the foundation stone of English grammar — because almost every rule of articles, number and agreement begins here."*

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS CHAPTER

- ✓ What a noun is and the five things nouns can name
- ✓ A quick technique to identify any noun inside a sentence
- ✓ The five core types of noun and the article rules each one follows
- ✓ Countable vs uncountable nouns, and how singulars become plurals
- ✓ Special groups: words that look singular but are plural — and the reverse
- ✓ Collective nouns, compound nouns, the possessive case & more
- ✓ Common exam errors, with a 20-question practice test & answer key

1.1 What Is a Noun?

A **noun** is a **naming word**. It is the name we give to a person, a place, a thing, an idea, or an action. If you can put a name to it, that name is a noun.

Every noun in English names one of the following five groups:

Group	What it names	Examples
Persons	Names of people / professions	Sumit, Manshi, driver, doctor, soldier
Places	Names of locations	Indore, school, shop, room
Things	Objects you can see / touch	camera, bus, mobile, radio, chair
Ideas	Concepts you cannot touch	honesty, friendship, communism
Actions	Activities named as things	dance, dream, murder, sleeping

ℹ **Good to know** Ideas and actions cannot be touched — yet they are still nouns. This is the clue that leads us, later, to **abstract nouns**.

1.2 How to Identify a Noun in a Sentence

In an exam you often need to spot the noun quickly. There is a simple test: ask one of three question-words about the sentence. Whatever answers the question is the noun.

Question word	It points to
What?	A thing (non-living)
Who?	A person (as the doer)
Whom?	A person (as the receiver)

WORKED EXAMPLES

Ram works hard. → Who works hard? → **Ram** (noun)

Amit wants to meet Katrina Kaif. → Amit wants to meet whom? → **Katrina Kaif** (noun)

Radha bought sugar. → Radha bought what? → **sugar** (noun)

1.3 The Five Types of Noun

On the basis of what they name, nouns are classified into five types. Knowing the type tells you at once whether the noun is countable, whether it can be made plural, and whether it takes the article a/an.

- **1. Proper Noun** — a specific name
- **2. Common Noun** — a general category name
- **3. Collective Noun** — a name for a group
- **4. Material Noun** — a name for a material / substance
- **5. Abstract Noun** — a name for an idea, quality or state

◆ 1 · Proper Noun

A name used for one individual person, place or organisation. It is always written with a capital first letter.

✓ Treated as uncountable ✓ Always singular ✗ No plural form ✗ No "a / an" before it

Examples: London, Taj Mahal, Ganga.

Exception When a proper noun is used as a common noun (to mean "a person like..."), it can take an article and a plural: *He is **the** Shakespeare of India.* · *There are two **Rahuls** in our class.*

◆ 2 · Common Noun

The name of the category to which a proper noun belongs. ("London" is a proper noun; the category "city" is a common noun.)

✓ Countable ✓ Can be singular or plural ✓ A singular common noun needs a determiner (a / an / the / my ...)

Examples: person, city, monument, boy.

◆ 3 · Collective Noun

A noun that denotes a group of individuals taken together as one unit.

✓ Countable | ✓ Can be singular or plural | ✓ A singular collective noun needs a determiner (a / the ...)

Examples: assembly, family, crew. (A full reference list appears in Section 1.11.)

◆ 4 · Material Noun

The name of a material or substance out of which things are made.

✓ Uncountable | ✓ Always singular | ✗ No plural form | ✗ No "a / an" before it

Examples: sugar, soil, milk, gold, water.

◆ 5 · Abstract Noun

A noun denoting an idea, quality or state rather than a concrete object — something you can think of but cannot touch.

✓ Usually uncountable | ✓ Usually singular | ✗ Usually no plural | ✗ Usually no "a / an"

Abstract nouns usually fall into four sub-groups:

Sub-group	Examples
Names of feelings	enjoyment, anger, fear
Names of actions	laughter, theft, swimming
Names of states	freedom, childhood, misery
Names of qualities	kindness, beauty, honesty

★ **Exam point** Proper, material and abstract nouns share the same exam behaviour: treated as uncountable, singular, no plural and no "a/an" (unless used in a special sense). Remember these three together and you will solve most article-based questions instantly.

1.4 Nouns Based on Number — Countable & Uncountable

Every noun is either countable or uncountable. This single idea controls articles, plurals and subject–verb agreement.

COUNTABLE NOUN

- Can be singular or plural
- We can count them (one, two, three ...)
- Includes: common & collective nouns

UNCOUNTABLE NOUN

- Singular only
- We cannot count them
- Includes: proper, material & abstract nouns

◆ Measurement: Number vs Quantity

Countable nouns are measured by **number**; uncountable nouns are measured by **quantity**.

Number → for countable nouns	Quantity → for uncountable nouns
a, an, one, two, three …	some, much, a little, an amount of …
many, few, several, a dozen, a hundred, a thousand	volume → litre · weight → kg · length → metre

Quick rule Use **many / few / a number of** with countables; use **much / little / an amount of** with uncountables. ✓ many books · ✓ much water · ✗ much books

1.5 Singular & Plural — Forming the Plural

Countable nouns change form from singular to plural. Most simply add -s, but several groups follow special patterns that you must memorise for exams.

◆ Regular plurals (add -s / -es / change -y to -ies)

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
boy	boys	cat	cats
girl	girls	horse	horses
book	books	bus	buses
player	players	city	cities

◆ -f / -fe → -ves

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
wife	wives	knife	knives
leaf	leaves	loaf	loaves
thief	thieves	half	halves

Exceptions Some -f words simply add -s: roof → roofs, chief → chiefs, belief → beliefs, proof → proofs.

◆ Mutated (irregular) plurals — the vowel changes

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
goose	geese	mouse	mice
foot	feet	man	men
tooth	teeth	woman	women

◆ Foreign (Latin & Greek) plurals

Many academic words keep their original Latin or Greek plural endings. These are exam favourites.

Pattern	Singular → Plural
-on → -a	phenomenon → phenomena, criterion → criteria
-um → -a	medium → media, bacterium → bacteria, stratum → strata, millennium → millennia, datum → data, curriculum → curricula (also used: stadium → stadia / stadiums, auditorium → auditoria / auditoriums, podium → podia / podiums, aquarium → aquaria / aquariums)
-us → -i	fungus → fungi, cactus → cacti, radius → radii, focus → foci, syllabus → syllabi, nucleus → nuclei
-is → -es	oasis → oases, thesis → theses, axis → axes, crisis → crises, basis → bases, hypothesis → hypotheses

★ **Exam point** Remember the four endings as a chant: **-on / -um → -a, -us → -i, -is → -es.** A question like "Plural of criterion?" then becomes automatic — **criteria**.

1.6 Special Number Groups

Some nouns do not behave the way their endings suggest. These deceptive groups are tested again and again, so learn them as ready-made lists.

◆ A · Look singular and are uncountable (singular verb, no plural)

Group	Words
Words in -age	luggage, baggage, breakage, postage, wastage, wreckage, garbage, damage (= harm)
Words in -ery / -ry	stationery, machinery, jewellery, crockery, cutlery, greenery, poetry, scenery, pottery
Mass nouns	furniture, equipment, information, advice, knowledge, evidence, homework, money, bread, fuel, soap, chalk, mischief, behaviour
Abstract & general	weather, traffic, progress, health, access, news, work (= labour), prose, education

⚠ **Avoid this error** These take a singular verb and have no plural form. ✗ She gave me many advices. → ✓ She gave me a lot of advice / a piece of advice.

◆ B · Look singular but are plural (take a plural verb)

people | cattle | police | poultry | gentry | peasantry | clergy | cavalry | infantry | vermin | folk

EXAMPLE

✓ The police **have** arrested the thief. (not ✗ has)

✓ The cattle **are** grazing in the field.

◆ C · Look plural but are singular (take a singular verb)

Category	Examples
Subjects	mathematics, physics, politics, economics, phonetics, acoustics, ethics (as a subject)

Category	Examples
Games	billiards, draughts, darts, athletics, gymnastics, aquatics
Diseases	mumps, measles, rickets, shingles, diabetes
Titles & names	The Three Musketeers, Gulliver's Travels, Arabian Nights, the United States, the Netherlands
Others	news, innings (one innings)

EXAMPLE

✓ Mathematics **is** my favourite subject. · ✓ No news **is** good news.

◆ D · Always plural (no singular form; take a plural verb)

Group	Words
Things in pairs	glasses, spectacles, goggles, jeans, shorts, pants, pyjamas, trousers
Tools in pairs	binoculars, bellows, pincers, pliers, forceps, scissors, tongs, fetters
Always-plural words	ashes, alms, odds, tidings, thanks, congratulations, regards, compliments (= greetings), respects (pay one's respects), damages (= compensation), amends

Pair-words tip Count them with **"a pair of"**: a pair of scissors, two pairs of trousers. With "a pair of", the verb is singular: ✓ A pair of shoes **is** missing.

◆ E · Always plural in this sense (take a plural verb)

These nouns are used only in the plural in the given sense and always take a **plural verb**.

surroundings | orders (= commands) | pains (= efforts) | earnings | riches | savings | winnings | premises | rations | goods | assets | credentials | proceeds | belongings | valuables | chattels | eatables | annals | archives | outskirts | contents | dues | repairs | auspices

EXAMPLE

✓ My earnings **are** not enough. · ✓ The goods **have** been delivered. · ✓ Riches **do** not bring happiness.

◆ F · Same form in singular and plural

sheep | deer | fish | salmon | trout | swine | offspring | series | species | aircraft | spacecraft | crossroads | whereabouts | headquarters | means

EXAMPLE

✓ One deer **was** seen. · ✓ Ten deer **were** seen. · ✓ This species **is** rare; both species **are** rare.

1.7 Nouns That Change Meaning in the Plural

Some nouns mean one thing in the singular but something quite different in the plural. These are high-frequency in objective papers.

Singular (meaning)	Plural	Meaning of the plural
air (the air)	airs	affected manners, vanity
advice (counsel)	advices	formal notices / reports (commerce)
abuse (insult)	abuses	evil / corrupt practices
alphabet (set of letters)	alphabets	different writing systems
arm (part of the body)	arms	weapons
asset (useful quality)	assets	property, wealth
colour (hue)	colours	flag, regimental colours
force (strength)	forces	army, troops
chain (series of links)	chains	bondage, fetters
water (liquid)	waters	sea, a large body of water
return (coming back)	returns	profits, income
sand (grains)	sands	desert, sandy beach
manner (way / method)	manners	behaviour, etiquette
amend (verb: to correct)	amends	compensation (make amends)
sky (the sky)	skies	weather / climate
pain (ache)	pains	effort, care (take pains)
quarter (one-fourth)	quarters	lodgings, residence
custom (tradition)	customs	import / export duties
fruit (food)	fruits	results, rewards (the fruits of hard work)
regard (respect)	regards	good wishes
effect (result)	effects	belongings (personal effects)
work (labour)	works	factory / literary writings
wood (timber)	woods	forest
beef (meat)	beeves	cattle / oxen (old use)

1.8 Noun + Preposition + Same Noun

When the same noun is repeated around a preposition, the noun stays **singular** and the phrase expresses continuity or closeness.

hand in hand | door to door | word for word | day by day | man after man | city after city

EXAMPLE

✓ They walked **hand in hand**. · ✗ hands in hands

1.9 Noun Based on Sense

Two nouns may look like synonyms yet differ in the exact sense the sentence needs. Choosing the right one is a common error-spotting task.

SENSE PAIRS

✗ We shall surely attend the marriage of our friend. → ✓ We shall surely attend the wedding of our friend.

Exam preference: There is no **room** in this car for anyone else. (room = space for people to fit)

Wedding = the ceremony; **marriage** = the relationship / institution. **Room** = space available for people or things; **space** = an empty area, or outer space. (In everyday English "There is no space in this car" is also used, but exams expect **room**.)

1.10 Part & Total

When we mean **one part of a whole** (one member of a group), use the of-structure instead of joining the two nouns.

ALL OF THEM (TOTAL)

- He couldn't convince his family **members**. (all of them)
- They, along with their friends, met the club **members**.

ONE OF THEM (PART)

- He couldn't convince **a member of his family**.
- They, along with their friends, met **a member of the club**.

⚠ **Avoid this error** ✗ He couldn't convince his family member. → ✓ He couldn't convince a member of his family.

1.11 Collective Nouns — Reference List

A collective noun names a group. Use the right one for the right set of members — examiners love testing these pairings.

Collective noun	A group of …
a flock	sheep, goats, birds
a fleet	ships / cars
a flight	stairs / flying birds
a convoy	vehicles travelling together under protection

Collective noun	A group of …
an armada	warships
a pride	lions
a bunch	keys / flowers / grapes
a choir	singers
an alliance	political parties / nations
a troop	soldiers / monkeys
a troupe	stage performers (actors, dancers)
a parliament	owls
a board	directors
a jury	judges (in a competition) / jurors (in court)
a crew	sailors / airline staff
a gang	criminals / labourers
a syndicate	smugglers / merchants
a mob	angry people
a bevy	girls / ladies
a school / shoal	fish
a swarm	insects / flies / bees / ants
a lock	hair
a heap	garbage / money / grain / sand / dust
a stack	papers / files / hay
a bundle	clothes / sticks
a herd	cattle / deer / elephants
a delegation	representatives
a bench	judges (in court)
a chain	mountains / events / shops

1.12 Compound Nouns & Their Plurals

A compound noun is made of two or more words. The trick is knowing which word to make plural.
The rule: pluralise the principal (most important) word.

Singular	Plural	Which word changes
attorney general	attorneys general	first word

Singular	Plural	Which word changes
general manager	general managers	last word
secretary general	secretaries general	first word
son-in-law	sons-in-law	first word
daughter-in-law	daughters-in-law	first word
mother-in-law	mothers-in-law	first word
father-in-law	fathers-in-law	first word
brother-in-law	brothers-in-law	first word
stepmother	stepmothers	last word
stepfather	stepfathers	last word
shoemaker	shoemakers	whole word (+s)
penmaker	penmakers	whole word (+s)
passer-by	passers-by	first word
looker-on	lookers-on	first word
code of conduct	codes of conduct	first word
officer-in-charge	officers-in-charge	first word
commander-in-chief	commanders-in-chief	first word
handful	handfuls	last word (+s)
mouthful	mouthfuls	last word (+s)
spoonful	spoonfuls	last word (+s)
bagful	bagfuls	last word (+s)
truckful	truckfuls	last word (+s)

⚠ **Correct the common slip** The plural of commander-in-chief is ✓ commanders-in-chief, not ✗ commander-in-chiefs. Likewise secretary general → ✓ secretaries general (only the first word changes).

1.13 Modifiers — Number + Noun

When a number-and-noun phrase acts as an adjective before another noun, the inner noun stays **singular** and the phrase is usually hyphenated.

EXAMPLES

✓ They have found a 5,000-year-old gold coin. (not ✗ 5,000-years-old)

✓ The government has set up a five-member committee. (not ✗ five-members)

✓ I bought a ten-metre-long rope. (not ✗ ten-metres-long)

1.14 Nouns Based on Fraction (Subject–Verb Agreement)

With fractions and quantity-words — all of, most of, some of, a lot of, lots of, one-third of, two-thirds of, two-fifths of, five per cent of — the verb agrees with the **noun after "of"**, not with the fraction.

EXAMPLES

One-third of the pipe **is** broken. (pipe = singular → is)

One-third of the pipes **are** broken. (pipes = plural → are)

Do not confuse "**One of** + plural noun" is different: here the real subject is "one", so the verb is singular. ✓ One of the students **has** passed the exam.

1.15 The Possessive Case (Apostrophe)

The possessive case shows ownership. The default form is noun + **'s**, but several special situations decide whether to use 's or the "of" structure.

◆ Concept 1 · Possessive with living things

Use 's for living beings; prefer the of-form for non-living things.

EXAMPLE

✓ They have lost **Kamal's** watch. · ✓ the legs **of the table** (not ✗ the table's legs)

◆ Concept 2 · Two consecutive possessives

When two 's would come one after another, it is smoother to change one of them into an of-phrase.

EXAMPLE

Ram's brother's car is very costly. = ✓ The car **of Ram's brother** is very costly.

◆ Concept 3 · Possessive with a plural noun

For a plural noun already ending in -s, add only an apostrophe. For a plural that does not end in -s, add 's.

EXAMPLES

✓ the **boys'** hostel · ✓ the **teachers'** room · ✓ a **girls'** school

✓ **children's** books · ✓ **men's** clothing · ✓ **women's** rights

◆ Concept 4 · Joint vs separate possession

JOINT (ONE SHARED THING)

- 's on the **last** name only
- Ram and **Sita's** house is in the same colony. (they share one house)

SEPARATE (ONE EACH)

- 's on **both** names; the noun becomes plural
- **Ram's** and **Sita's** houses are in the same colony. (two houses)

◆ When the apostrophe is used with non-living nouns

Although non-living things normally use the of-form, the apostrophe is used in these fixed cases:

Case	Examples
Idioms	a stone's throw away, at one's wits' end, for heaven's sake
Time	a moment's delay, a day's leave, a month's pay, today's work
Units / measure	a ton's weight, two tons' weight, a dollar's worth, a mile's distance
Dignified objects	the earth's surface, the moon's light, the sun's rays
Personification	the country's honour, Nature's laws, Death's door, Fortune's favourite

1.16 Noun Formation from an Adjective

Place **"the"** before certain adjectives and they become a plural noun standing for a whole class of people. Such a noun takes a **plural verb** and is never written with –s.

Adjective	The + adjective (= a class of people)
poor	the poor (= poor people)
rich	the rich
blind	the blind
deaf	the deaf
needy	the needy
honest	the honest
wise	the wise
strong	the strong
weak	the weak

EXAMPLE

✗ He always helps poors. → ✓ He always helps the poor.

✓ The rich **are** not always happy.

★ Common Errors to Avoid

Incorrect	Correct
✗ She gave me many informations.	✓ She gave me a lot of information.
✗ The scenery here are beautiful.	✓ The scenery here is beautiful.
✗ My all furnitures are new.	✓ All my furniture is new.
✗ The poors need our help.	✓ The poor need our help.
✗ Mathematics are easy for me.	✓ Mathematics is easy for me.

Incorrect	Correct
✗ The police is searching the area.	✓ The police are searching the area.
✗ He gave me two breads.	✓ He gave me two loaves of bread.
✗ I bought a 10-kilometres-long rope.	✓ I bought a 10-kilometre-long rope.
✗ He couldn't convince his family member.	✓ He couldn't convince a member of his family.
✗ The plural of criterion is criterions.	✓ The plural of criterion is criteria.

TEST YOURSELF

Practice Exercise — 20 MCQs

Choose the correct option. Answers with short explanations are given at the end.

1. The plural of "criterion" is:

(a) criterions (b) criteria (c) criterias (d) criterion

2. Which noun is uncountable?

(a) chair (b) information (c) book (d) boy

3. Choose the correct sentence:

(a) The news are sad. (b) The news were sad.
(c) The news is sad. (d) A news is sad.

4. The plural of "son-in-law" is:

(a) son-in-laws (b) sons-in-law (c) sons-in-laws (d) son-in-law

5. A group of lions is called a:

(a) herd (b) flock (c) pride (d) swarm

6. Identify the abstract noun:

(a) gold (b) London (c) army (d) honesty

7. Fill in: All my luggage ____ ready.

(a) is (b) are (c) were (d) have

8. The plural of "cactus" is:

(a) cacti (b) cactuses only (c) cactus (d) cactae

9. "He always helps ____ poor." Fill in the blank:

(a) a (b) — (no word) (c) an (d) the

10. Which is a collective noun?

(a) honesty (b) sugar (c) jury (d) London

11. "Mathematics ____ an interesting subject."

(a) are (b) were (c) have (d) is

12. In "Amit wants to meet Katrina", the noun "Katrina" answers the question:

(a) what? (b) who? (c) whom? (d) which?

13. The plural of "phenomenon" is:

(a) phenomenons (b) phenomenae (c) phenomena (d) phenomenon

14. Choose the correct possessive for one house shared by Ram and Sita:

(a) Ram and Sita's house (b) Ram's and Sita house
(c) Ram and Sita house's (d) Rams' Sita house

15. "The police ____ caught the thief."

(a) have (b) has (c) is (d) was

16. Which word has the same form in the singular and the plural?

(a) child (b) sheep (c) mouse (d) tooth

17. The plural of "commander-in-chief" is:

(a) commanders-in-chief (b) commander-in-chiefs
(c) commanders-in-charge (d) commander-in-chieves

18. "She has lots of ____ to share."

(a) advices (b) an advice (c) advise (d) advice

19. In "a 5,000-year-old coin", the inner noun is:

(a) years (plural) (b) year's (c) years' (d) year (singular)

20. "Arms" (plural of arm) in "The rebels laid down their arms" means:

(a) body limbs (b) weapons (c) chairs (d) sleeves

ANSWER KEY

1 (b)	2 (b)	3 (c)	4 (b)	5 (c)	6 (d)	7 (a)	8 (a)	9 (d)	10 (c)
11 (d)	12 (c)	13 (c)	14 (a)	15 (a)	16 (b)	17 (a)	18 (d)	19 (d)	20 (b)

WHY THIS ANSWER?

1. (b) criteria — Greek -on → -a (like phenomenon → phenomena).
2. (b) information — Information is a mass noun: no plural, no "a/an".
3. (c) The news is sad. — "News" looks plural but takes a singular verb.
4. (b) sons-in-law — Pluralise the principal word: sons-in-law.
5. (c) pride — A pride of lions.
6. (d) honesty — Honesty is a quality — it cannot be touched.
7. (a) is — Luggage is uncountable → singular verb.
8. (a) cacti — Latin -us → -i. ("Cactuses" is also used, so "cactuses only" is wrong.)
9. (d) the — The + adjective = a class of people (the poor).
10. (c) jury — A jury is a group of jurors / judges.
11. (d) is — Names of subjects ending in -ics take a singular verb.
12. (c) whom? — Katrina receives the action → whom?
13. (c) phenomena — -on → -a.
14. (a) Ram and Sita's house — Joint possession: 's on the last name only.
15. (a) have — Police is plural in sense → have.
16. (b) sheep — One sheep, ten sheep.
17. (a) commanders-in-chief — Principal word "commander" takes the plural.
18. (d) advice — Advice (noun) is uncountable; "advise" is the verb.
19. (d) year (singular) — Number + noun used as an adjective stays singular.
20. (b) weapons — arms = weapons.

— END OF CHAPTER 1 —

ENGLISH GRAMMAR · MODULE 10

10 Tense

> *"Tense is the verb form that pins an action to a point in time — past, present or future — and tells us whether it is simple, ongoing, completed, or both. Master the twelve tenses, and you can place any action exactly where it belongs."*

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS CHAPTER

- ✓ The five verb forms (V1–V5) and the master 12-tense grid
- ✓ All four present tenses, with their many uses
- ✓ All four past tenses, including "it is high time" & "by the time"
- ✓ All four future tenses
- ✓ Since vs for, and the stative verbs that avoid the continuous
- ✓ The sequence of tenses — matching the verb across clauses
- ✓ Common errors, with a 20-question practice test & answer key

10.1 What Is Tense?

Tense is the verb form that shows the **time** of an action. To build tenses you must first know the five forms of a verb.

Form	Name	Example (go)
V1	base / present (with I, we, you, they)	go
V2	past	went
V3	past participle (used in perfect tenses)	gone
V4	present participle (used in continuous tenses)	going
V5	present with he / she / it (-s / -es)	goes

10.2 The Master 12-Tense Grid

Every tense is a combination of a **time** (present / past / future) and an **aspect** (simple / continuous / perfect / perfect continuous). Memorise this single grid and you own the whole tense system.

	Simple	Continuous	Perfect	Perfect continuous
Present	V1 / V5	is / am / are + V4	has / have + V3	has / have been + V4
Past	V2	was / were + V4	had + V3	had been + V4
Future	will / shall + V1	will / shall be + V4	will / shall have + V3	will / shall have been + V4

Active voice
Subject + main verb + object

Passive voice
Object (now subject) + be + V3 + by + subject (now object)

GOLDEN RULE
While changing the voice, **never change the meaning or the tense**. Only the form of the verb changes — and the subject and the object exchange places.

◆ Subject ↔ object pronoun chart

When the doer moves after "by", its pronoun changes from the subject form to the object form.

Subject (doer)	Object (after "by")	Subject (doer)	Object (after "by")
I	me	he	him
we	us	she	her
you	you	they	them
it	it	who	whom

12.4 The Master Tense Table

This is the heart of the chapter. The passive helping verb (a form of **be**) changes with the tense, but the main verb is always **V3**.

Tense	Active voice	Passive voice
Simple present	V1 / V5	is / am / are + V3
Simple past	V2	was / were + V3
Simple future	will / shall + V1	will / shall + be + V3
Present continuous	is / am / are + V4	is / am / are + being + V3
Past continuous	was / were + V4	was / were + being + V3
Present perfect	has / have + V3	has / have + been + V3
Past perfect	had + V3	had + been + V3
Future perfect	will / shall + have + V3	will / shall + have + been + V3

Note Future continuous and the three perfect continuous tenses are normally **not** changed into the passive voice.

12.5 Passive of Assertive Sentences

Tense by tense, with the formula and a worked example for each.

THE FOUR CHANGES

When you turn direct speech into indirect speech, adjust four things — the **tense**, the **pronoun**, the **time / place word**, and the **modal**. The next sections cover each one.

13.3 The Tense-Change Table

When the reporting verb is in the **past tense**, the tense of the reported speech generally moves **"one step back"**. This table is the heart of the chapter.

Direct speech (tense)	Indirect speech (tense)
Simple present	Simple past
Present continuous	Past continuous
Present perfect	Past perfect
Present perfect continuous	Past perfect continuous
Simple past	Past perfect
Past continuous	Past perfect continuous
Past perfect	Past perfect (no change)
Past perfect continuous	Past perfect continuous (no change)

EXAMPLE

He said, "I **am** busy." → He said that he **was** busy.

She said, "I **have finished** the work." → She said that she **had finished** the work.

13.4 When the Tense Does Not Change

The tense of the reported speech stays the same in these cases:

- If the reporting verb is in the **present or future** tense.
- If the reported speech is a **universal truth, a habitual fact or a proverb**.

EXAMPLES

He says, "I am busy." → He says that he is busy. (reporting verb in the present)

The teacher said, "The sun rises in the east." → The teacher said that the sun rises in the east. (universal truth)

13.5 Changes in Modals

Modal verbs also shift one step back in indirect speech.

Direct	Indirect
will / shall	would

COMPOUND — TWO MAIN CLAUSES + FANBOYS (FOR · AND · NOR · BUT · OR · YET · SO)

He finished his exercise **and** put away his books.

He must work very hard, **or** he will not win the first prize.

He is ill, **so** he can't come to school.

COMPLEX — MAIN CLAUSE + SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

He said **that he was guilty**. · The moment **which is lost** is lost forever.

He died in the village **where he was born**. · **If you are not an Indian**, you cannot be admitted.

18.3 The Three Clauses in a Complex Sentence

Clause	Works as / connectors	Example
Noun clause	a noun (subject / object) · that, what, whether, how	He said **that he was guilty**.
Adjective clause	describes a noun · who, which, that, whose, where (after a noun)	He bought the house **which belonged to his uncle**. · He died in the village **where he was born**.
Adverb clause	answers how? why? where? when? on what condition? · as, if, because, when, where, though	He died **where he was born**. · **If you are not an Indian**, you cannot be admitted.

★ **Exam point** "Where" can begin either kind of clause. After a noun (the village **where** ...) it is an **adjective** clause; without a noun before it (He sat **where** ...) it is an **adverb** clause of place.

Adverb-clause sub-types: **manner** (how?), **reason** (why?), **place** (where?), **time** (when?), **condition** (if ...), **concession** (though ...).

18.4 The Four Sentence Types (by Function)

Type	Example
Assertive — affirmative	Man is mortal.
Assertive — negative	Man is not immortal.
Interrogative	Are you going to the market?
Imperative	Shut the door, please.
Exclamatory	What a beautiful painting!

18.5 Affirmative ↔ Negative

To turn an affirmative sentence into a negative one **without changing its meaning**, use a negative word and, usually, the opposite word.

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