Grammar is the structure of a language and is composed of the sub-elements of inflection and of syntax. Inflection is concerned with the grammatical form of the words of a language – in the case of English inflection most commonly takes the form of endings such as the {s} which marks many nouns as plural or the {ed} which marks a verb as a past tense form or a past participle. For further explanation and exemplification see inflection. Syntax, in its narrowest sense, is concerned with the relative order of words and phrases, such as the fact that in English articles (the and a(n)) precede nouns, e.g. the house rather than following them as in ungrammatical *house the, which the asterisk signals that the structure which follows is not acceptable. Some of the areas of syntax relevant to HoE are included in this website.

Grammar is also a discipline in linguistics which is concerned with the study of syntax and grammatical morphology (= inflection).

Grammars are resources used to codify StE. As part of the codification process grammars have been instruments of prescriptivism. More recently they have moved closer to a descriptive perspective. Examples: early more prescriptive grammars of English include Lowth’s and Murray’s. Recent ones such as Biber et al. 1999 are more descriptive.


The grammar of Standard English (StE) is relatively uniform throughout the English-speaking world. It is essentially the only grammatical form of English which is written (see 13.2.1). The schools teach only this form of English. Even speakers who use a non-standard form of English when speaking would have a hard time writing or even just reading texts written in a non-standard form.

Vernacular grammar (see 8.5.2) is a term employed to describe a wide spectrum non-standard grammatical structures. Vernacular grammar is widely used (though seldom if ever in writing) in the daily communication of most speakers of English. Just how far it differs from the grammar of StE depends on numerous factors such as the age, education, social class, ethnicity, and gender of the person concerned (for the effect of gender see the next paragraph). Those who speak a traditional dialect are likely to diverge frequently and very noticeably from the grammar of StE. Speakers of non-standard General English (GenE) conform much more to the norms of StE, but may frequently violate linguistic shibboleths which are insignificant from the point of view of comprehensibility, but which are subject to social penalties.
In the area of grammar Cheshire reports a much greater tendency for boys who are firmly embedded in local vernacular culture to use local non-standard forms than for girls to do so in the urban English of Reading, England. The non-standard, vernacular forms of the verbs she investigated seem to reflect "toughness" for the boys. The present-tense inflection {-s} occurred in older Reading English only with lexical have and do while the auxiliaries have and do were uninflected in all persons. The auxiliary do was once invariant do, and the past was did, cf. Lexical do was invariant does; past was done, cf.

Well, how much do he want for it? (present auxiliary)

Well, be never done it, did he? (Cheshire 1978: 55, 57)

In the meantime there has been adjustment of the auxiliary have to conform with StE. This involves a change in only the third person singular and may therefore be easier to carry through. For lexical have all the forms except the third person singular have to change in order to agree with StE, and this change is still incomplete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical verb</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>auxiliary verb</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>has</td>
<td>We has a little fire, keeps us warm.</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>She've come down from London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dos /duz/</td>
<td>We dos some fishing.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Well, how much do be want for it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Lexical and auxiliary have and do in earlier Reading English (examples from Cheshire 1978: 52, 55; have example from Sarah Waters. Fingersmith. London: Virago, 2005: 54.

In the case of do there are, today, three forms: does /dəz/, do /duː/, and dos /dʊz/ which are distributed as in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd person singular subject</th>
<th>all other subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lexical do</td>
<td>auxiliary do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does /dəz/</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do /duː/</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dos /dʊz/</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Lexical and auxiliary do in current Reading English (Cheshire 1978: 57)

The third person singular auxiliary do is still frequent, and in the negative doesn't occurs in less than 5% of the cases and don't in over 95% of the time. The putative development is from the lexical verb dos (all persons) to does (all persons) to StE distribution

Presumably, the auxiliary have was once invariably have and lexical have was invariably has.

In Cheshire's study the frequency for has as a main verb in non-3rd person singular position was approximately 50%.

If followed by a non-finite complement (= an infinitive or an –ing form), main verbs took {-s} in all persons singular and plural at a rate of 47-57%. This was most often the case when the following complement was an –ing-form, e.g. I fancies going over Caversham. When the complement clause was finite, i.e. had a tensed verb, the main verb seldom (at a rate of 0-2.6%) had {-s}, cf. I believe that there is, you know, life after death. Besides this syntactic condition or constraint, there is also a lexical constraint.
According to it non-third-person singular {-s} is much more frequent (90-95.5%) with so-called vernacular verbs (e.g. go "say," bus "go by bus," or kill "beat in a fight," cf. "so I goes, oh clear off." As Cheshire remarks, “the frequency of use of the non-standard form of regular verb is forms a regular pattern, with a high frequency used by central members of the [vernacular] peer group, and a low frequency used by boys who did not belong to the peer group” (ibid.: 64).


(Grammar and grammars)
**Grammar categories**

- **Grammar categories**
  - Universal grammatical categories
  - Vernacular universals

(Secondary grammatical categories)

(Syntax)

**Grammar categories:** the primary division of all words into parts of speech and the secondary association of categories like tense, modality, and aspect with the verb and case, number, and gender with the noun.

**Universal grammatical categories** are assumed to occur in all languages. Examples would include parts of speech such as nouns and verbs and maybe such secondary grammatical categories as TMA (tense, modality, aspect). One of the greatest problems in approaching the question of universals is the difficulty which exists in deciding what is comparable in different languages. The criteria can be (1) structural or (2) semantic-functional, whereby the latter is the most likely and best approach according to Croft (1990: 11). Semantic-functional includes pragmatic (discourse structure; forms of greeting; discourse-defined connectives; politeness expressions) – “all essentially external” to the language itself. The suggested procedure would be: (a) pick a semantic-pragmatic feature or situation; (b) see what morphosyntactic constructions are used to express it; and (c) look for relationships of dependency between the semantic-pragmatic feature and other linguistic factors expressed by the construction (ibid.: 12). Note that difficulties arise when a given form has multiple functions.

This might be illustrated by looking at whether all languages have subjects. Structurally the notion of subject might be expressed (1) by case marking or prepositional marking; (2) by agreement (usually subject-verb concord); or (3) by word order. However, (1) and (2) are not always easy to recognize. A semantic-pragmatic approach might use a criterion such as “agent of an action” or topic of a sentence (ibid.: 13). In OE the subject was marked by case. As the case endings decayed, the subject was increasingly marked by word order and identified as the topic. English practice does not support any particular universal principle.


**Vernacular universals** are the phonological and grammatical processes which occur in a wide variety of English vernaculars throughout the world. Vernaculars in this sense include not only GenE but also traditional dialects and creoles and may be due to innate features of the bioprogram. “The
basilectal form is PRIMITIVE, part of the innate bioprogram, and the standard is LEARNED, an experiential excrescence on the bioprogram” (Chambers 2004: 139). “Put simply, the more urban and mobile the social setting the more standard the speech.” (ibid.: 137) Example: the tendency to realize unstressed {-ing} as /in/ as in walkin’. These vernacular universals are most likely to occur in working class and rural vernaculars, in child language, in pidgins and creoles and in interlanguage varieties (ibid.: 128). Among the main candidates for vernacular universals in English besides the example just given we find the phonological features of the simplification of final consonant clusters (best realized as bes’) and the final devoicing of obstruents (kid as kit). Among the grammatical features there is conjugation regularization including reduction of strong verb forms as with blow – blowed - blowed, default singulars (they was…), multiple negation (they … don’t know no better; Text 8.3, Dickens. “Sam Welller,” 1837), and copula deletion (the hungry) (cf. ibid.: 130).

They may be motivated by “a few empirically defensible cognitive strategies” and may include motor economy and cognitive overload. In contrast to the idea of universals for which it is necessary to compare two or more languages and to investigate categories which are equivalent “… vernacular universals are identified partly in terms of their social patterning, in so far as there are regularities in the way they are socially embedded…” (ibid.: 130). The default singulars, for example is raised to universal status because it occurs in so many non-standard varieties of English (ibid.: 131). Linguistic constraints may be involved such as the nature of the subject. This includes the frequent use of was after existential there, as in There was about twenty-somethin’ boy and just four girls. The Northern Subject Rule has was more frequently after non-pronominal plural nouns than after pronouns (ibid.: 133).

There are difficulties with the default singular-hypothesis. In Text 11.1 (Carey, “Non-standard General AusE,” representative of 19th century AusE) we find non-standard concord: Harry were (line 1); they was (1); this were (3); I were (11)): The “cross-over” in number concord, i.e. was where StE would have were and vice versa, is not complete in this text. In l. 6 we find There was nothing… and in l. 11 we find fair is fair. However, assuming that Carey stays close to actual usage, the cross-over in the text cannot be explained by the usual approaches to default singulars (or, in some varieties, the opposite: default plurals (cf. Tagliomamonte 2009). The best assumption is that the usage imputed to Kelly uses some combination of the Northern Subject Rule and the default singular but an inexplicable default plural (I were).

The principles which lie behind vernacular universals are given according to the following instances:

- phonology: motor economy such as consonant cluster simplification (ibid.: 139);
- conjugation regularization due to cognitive overload, “whereby idiosyncratic retrieval of strong forms carries higher cost than rule-governed or inferable generalizations”;
- multiple negation as an underlying principle of compositionality where “the morphosyntax carries more than one negative marker but the semantic interpretation is a single negative”;
- avoiding absolute redundancy as with default singulars: “Nonconcord is structure-independent”; the information (concord in number, gender, person) is “absolutely redundant” (ibid.: 140).
(Grammar and Grammars)

(Grmmatical categories)

Primary grammatical categories

Parts of speech (PoS’s)

Inflection in English

Adjectives

Adverbs

Determiners

Pronouns

Conjunctions and connectors

Prepositions

Nouns

Verbs

(Secondary grammatical categories)

(Syntax)

Primary grammatical categories are the classes into which the words of a language are divided. The fundamental, or primary grammatical categories are the eight or nine such groupings which are generally made in traditional grammar: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, preposition, conjunction, determiner / article, and interjection. These primary grammatical categories are known as parts of speech or word classes. The purpose which such groups (and their sub-groups) serve is to indicate the grammatical behavior of their members. For example, one of the ways in which nouns are divided is according to their countability: count vs. mass. This is a subdivision of nouns according to whether they may take a plural (= count) or not (= mass). Examples: count: books, words; mass: printed matter. See also secondary grammatical categories.

Parts of speech (PoS’s) can be grouped in various ways. One of these ways distinguishes the more PoS’s which contain lexical words, viz. noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. Since these PoS’s can be expanded by adding new items as needed, they are called open classes. English has extended its vocabulary both by derivation and by borrowing from other languages chiefly by adding members to the open classes. Relatively few borrowings have been in the PoS of the preposition and only exceptional ones in the area of pronouns. Consequently, these PoS’s consist of grammatical words and are generally regarded as closed classes (or systems).

A second way of dividing up the PoS’s is according to whether they take inflections (see inflection in English) or otherwise have secondary grammatical features. The noun, verb, pronoun, adjective, adverbs, and some sub-groups of determiners (possessives, demonstratives, and some indefinites) vary in this way, i.e. they have differing forms according to such categories as number, gender, case, tense, or comparison. The PoS’s which remain unchanged are sometimes referred to as particles.

Adjective is a part of speech or word class. Adjectives commonly modify (or further describe) nouns and pronouns. In OE adjectives preceding a noun agreed with them in case, number, and gender.

Example: (man) lýswæs hwæt (gedo) “(someone does an) evil deed” (Text 2.1, Æðelbriht’s Laws, 602 or
Most of the preceding had to do with adverbs derived from adjectives. Many adverbs are, however, not all adjective inflection has been lost as the comparative and superlative forms of short (one-syllable) adjectives and some two-syllable ones, esp. those ending in -er (prettier), -ow (narrower), -le (gentlest) take the endings {-er} and {-est} even in ModE. Others, ending in -er/-ure such as clever alternate (cleverer or more clever). The remainder, however, show a distinct tendency toward the periphrastic formation of the comparative and superlative as do some monosyllabic ones (more real). A few adjectives have remained fully irregular since OE times, e.g. OE god-bet(t)ra-bet(e)st and ModE, good-better-best or OE, yfel-wierla/wyrsa-wierest/wyrst and ModE, ill-worse-worst. (Note that bad, a suppletive (i.e. etymologically unrelated) form shows up relatively late and is of obscure origin, possibly derived from the word heedd or hadling derogatory words for go.) Not all adjective have comparative and superlative forms, for example ones derived from nouns, esp. in {-i(-al)} frequently do not, cf. atomic (reactor) or polar (bear).

**Adverbs** are a *part of speech* or *word class*. Adverbs commonly modify (or further describe) verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. In OE adverbs could be derived from adjectives by adding the suffix {-lic}, cf. *wretlic bongah* “wonderously it hangs” (Text 3.5) or {-e} as in *sweotule aseogan* “openly speak” (Text 2.4). In ME {-lic} had usually become {-ly}, cf. *And specially* from *every shires ende* (Chaucer). *Canterbury Tales*. “Prologue,” late 14th century, l. 15) as it remains in ModE. Note, however, that a number of adverbs in ModE are derived rather from ones ending in {-e} in OE and therefore have no {-ly} ending in ModE, as with *to work hard*. Furthermore, the alternation, as in “Drive slow” vs. “Drive slowly.” The widespread use in ModE of adjectives for adverbs may be closely related to the differing historical traditions in adverb marking in English.

Most of the preceding had to do with adverbs derived from adjectives. Many adverbs are, however, independent and most of these go back to OE forms such as elles “else,” as in Chaucer’s ME.
“Prologue” to the Canterbury Tales (late 14th century, l. 385): *And elles certein were they to blame. “And elsewise they were certain to bear the blame.”* We find such central adverbs as the following examples (OE-ModE) of place (*hēr*, *ðēr*-there, *geond-yonder*, *(under*) *bæc-back*, *dāne-down*), time (*nū-now*, *dā-then*, *sum + tima-sometime*), manner (*ðús-thus*, *sō-so*, *sum + bā-somehow*), and degree (*hādor-rather*; but note ME borrowing from Old French *verai-very*).

(Adjectives)
(Adverbs)
**Determiners**

Specifiers
Articles
Demonstratives
Possessive determiners / adjectives
Interrogative determiners
Indefinite determiners

(Pronouns)
(Conjunctions and connectors)
(Prepositions)
(Nouns)
(Verbs)

Determiners are a class containing *articles, demonstratives, possessive adjectives, interrogative determiners, relative determiners, indefinite quantifiers* (*some, any, both,* etc.), and *cardinal* (*1, 2, 3*) and *ordinal* (*1st, 2nd, 3rd*) numerals. Throughout the history of the language determiners have preceded the nouns they are associated with. It is plausibly claimed that the articles of English developed out of earlier demonstratives whose emphatic *deictic* use to stress a particular (or specific) person, place, or thing was gradually generalized as the definite article. This is an independent, perhaps universal type of development, and some see it as one of the *universal grammatical categories* assumed to belong to the bioprogram (along with *PoS, anteriority, perfective aspect, potentiality* (future-irrealis), and *SVO word order*). If the source language morphemes for “certain minimal functions” are lost, lexical forms will be adopted to fulfill them. They include the superstrate demonstrative for the definite article and the superstrate word for “one” for the indefinite article.

Specifiers are a sub-type of *determiner*. It marks the following noun as known and unique. Example: *my book* as opposed to *semi-specified one of my books* or *unspecified a book*.

Articles belong together with other *specifiers* or *determiners* such as the *demonstratives* a *part of speech* or *word class*. Articles are distinguished as *definite the* and *indefinite a(n)*. (This distinction might be regarded as the realization of a *secondary grammatical category*, viz. *specificity*. The former developed out of the OE demonstrative; the latter, out of the unstressed numeral *oon* “one” to *a/an*. In English pidgins and creoles the indefinite article often appears as *one*, cf. *it a wan naif* “there was a knife” (Bickerton 1981: 55). In OE both were marked for *case, number, and gender*.

The use of a demonstrative before a noun has the effect of emphasizing (and specifying) the following noun. In emphatic speech styles this must have been common usage. From what initially were singular cases speakers would have generalized this usage. In this way the original deictic sense would then have become less prominent and the sense of specification would have been generalized to nouns for which
spatial deixis was not prominent, i.e. not just deictic *se fisc* (lit. “that fish”), but also *þurh þone hunger* (“by that hunger”), a much more abstract usage.

The paradigm for the articles in OE are given in the following tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td><em>se</em></td>
<td><em>þæt</em></td>
<td><em>þā</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td><em>þæs</em></td>
<td><em>þære</em></td>
<td><em>þæs</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td><em>þam</em></td>
<td><em>þære</em></td>
<td><em>þam</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td><em>þone</em></td>
<td><em>þā</em></td>
<td><em>þæt</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td><em>þý</em></td>
<td><em>þíþ</em></td>
<td><em>þam</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Demonstratives (used as definite articles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
<td><em>āne</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td><em>ānes</em></td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td><em>ānum</em></td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td><em>āne</em></td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td><em>āne</em></td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
<td><em>ān</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Numeral *one* (used as the indefinite article)

The definite article is more widely used in some varieties of English than in StE. In Northern English vernaculars, reduction as in *t farmer* “the farmer” may result in loss: *the* → *0* → *t* → *?* → zero when unstressed, and there is some loss of both the definite and the indefinite article there in comparison to StE, cf. *I’m bloody champion* (B. Hines. *Kes. Harmondsworth*: Penguin, 1969, 17).


Demonstratives together with other *specifiers* such as the *articles a part of speech* or *word class* belong to the *PoS of determiners*. They function as *pronouns* and as *determiners* and are the only determiners which mark singular and plural. Example: *this*-*these*. Demonstratives are fundamentally *deictic*, and basically emphatic. Since emphasis may tend to fade over time as seen in the change from demonstrative to definite article (see *articles*), emphatic *this here* and *that there* are a ModE way of re-introducing emphasis.

There was a split in the OE demonstrative paradigm resulting in a definite article (see *articles*), initially with singular *the* < OE *se* by analogy with the other *th-* forms and plural *tha*. A deictic system emerged from the other half of the split, where *that* (plural *tha*, later *those*) took on the meaning of deictic distance in the 12th century. The second of the two deictic determiners was generalized from *þis*, the nominative and accusative singular of the emphatic OE demonstrative to which the plural adjectival ending −*e* was added giving us the pair *this/these* (Lass 1992: 2.9.1.2). The full paradigm of forms appears in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td><em>þes</em></td>
<td><em>þæs</em></td>
<td><em>þis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td><em>þíses</em></td>
<td><em>þîse</em></td>
<td><em>þíses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td><em>þísum</em></td>
<td><em>þîse</em></td>
<td><em>þísum</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In some varieties, we find a three-stage system: *this*/*these* (near the speaker), *that*/*those* (near the hearer), and *yon(der)* (distant from both) which still reflects an earlier contrast. The distinction was not always carefully maintained, and the third member began to fade except in regional and traditional dialects. It is known, of course, to readers of Shakespeare, who are familiar with such lines as *But soft! what light through yonder window breaks* (Romeo and Juliet II.2) or *Yon(d)* [determiner] *Cassius has a lean and hungry look* (*Julius Caesar* I.2) (§6.3.3.2).

Demonstrative *theae* (“those”) occurs in Northern English, but non-standard *them* is more frequent, as it is in non-standard GenE. In IrE the demonstrative *them* is used not only attributively as in *them houses* but also by itself pronominally, e.g. *Them was cornstalks* (Filppula 2004: 93).

Demonstrative pronouns in the English Southwest are differently distinguished. Like StE the system marks close and distant, singular and plural, but also has a further distinction between count and mass nouns. Here pronoun case leveling can still be seen in the now rare use of non-standard *they* for equally non-standard, but general *them*, e.g. *Well, like think one what's in there now, her, for killing all they women* (Wagner 2004: 164).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>deixis</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>mass</th>
<th>StE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>close</td>
<td>singular</td>
<td><em>these</em> / <em>thick</em></td>
<td><em>this</em> (here)</td>
<td><em>this</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>plural</td>
<td><em>these</em> (here)</td>
<td><em>these</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distant</td>
<td>singular</td>
<td><em>thick, thicky</em> (there)</td>
<td><em>that</em> (there)</td>
<td><em>that</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>plural</td>
<td><em>they, them</em> there</td>
<td><em>those</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Demonstratives in Southwest English (from Wagner 2004: 163) (§8.2.7.2)


**Possessive determiners/adjectives** are a sub-grouping closely associated with the *personal pronouns*.

The possessive adjectives are really *determiners*, not *adjectives*. Examples (given in the order: pronoun, determiner): *mine, my; yours, your; his, his; hers, her*. The determiners are used before nouns while the pronouns are used in place of the whole *noun phrase*, cf. *That is my new book* → *That is mine*. In OE the genitive of the personal pronouns, e.g. nom. masc. sg. *hē > gen. his* or fem. *hēo > hire*, was adopted and used without further inflection, cf. *Se cyng sealde his land* (Carpenter 1891: 67), literally: “the king sold of him land.” In the first and second persons the genitive forms, e.g. *min* (gen. sg. of *iċ*) “my,
mine”; ēð (ditto of ēd) “thy, thine”; and ēre “our, ours” as well as sin (an original reflective form) “his, her(’s), their(’s)” were inflected like weak adjectives, as seen in the Lord’s Prayer And forgyf ēðūre “And forgive us our trespasses” vs. swā swā wē forgyfūrum “as we forgive our trespassers.”


**Interrogative determiners** are a sub-grouping of the determiners (and pronouns). Examples: which/what book (determiners); which, what, who, where, why, how (pronouns). The interrogative determiners are wh-question words used in determiner function. The fact that there are only two means that the distinction between human and non-human/inanimate as with which and who is not followed here. Rather, the distinction made is between specific and non-specific, as when which student refers to one in a contextually specified group while what student does not limit the identity of the student to a specific group. For many users of ModE this distinction is leveled to general what.

**Indefinite determiners** are a sub-grouping of the determiners (and pronouns). Examples: each, every, any, some with a following noun (determiners) or the same without a noun (pronouns). See indefinite pronouns.

(Pronouns)

(Adjectives)
(Adverbs)
(Determiners)

**Pronouns** are a part of speech or word class with a number of sub-classes including personal, reflective, possessive, demonstrative, interrogative, relative, and indefinite pronouns. With one exception pronouns replace not nouns, as is commonly thought, but noun phrases (NPs). The latter may consist of one or more determiners, adjectives, and nouns optionally followed by prepositional, participial, or complex adjective phrases or relative clauses. The one exception is the pronoun (or pro-form or prop-word) one (ME (o)on “one” < an as with the indefinite article), which may replace only the noun within an NP, e.g. That’s my new book → That’s my new one. This construction came into use in the early ME period, where anaphoric one follows an adjective as in… a moche feldes, / so grete one neuer be behold (Mannynbg HS (Hrl) 3267f) “… a large field, so great a one he never had beheld.” In the earliest examples one had personal reference, but in early ME non-personal reference began to develop (cf. He bænes a wunde in þe side… / And be bænes on þorn þis arum…, (Havelok, ll. 1981-3) (examples qtd. in Fischer 1992: 223f).
Personal pronouns

Second person pronoun usage
The second person plural pronoun
Inclusive and exclusive pronouns
(Reflective pronouns)
(Interrogative pronouns)
.Relative pronouns
(Indefinite pronouns)

Personal pronouns (systems of) are a sub-grouping of the pronouns which have a deictic function and indicate the person(s) speaking (1st person); the person(s) spoken to (2nd person); and the person(s) spoken about (3rd person). In English they are marked for case, number, and gender (3rd person singular only). The possessive pronouns and the reflexive pronouns are also differentiated by person.

As the comparison of the pronoun systems of English (link) shows, there have been alterations within the system over time and geographical spread. There is a basic stability in the system in the maintenance of the person-distinction (but see second person pronoun usage), but there has also been some loss of number distinctions as well as significant case leveling (see also nominative you and pronoun exchange) and a certain amount of discussion about the use of gender and inclusive / exclusive pronouns.

Second person pronoun usage has, with the loss of the thou-forms merged singular and plural in StE. In the early ME period the use of singular you began to be established if not under the direct influence of the use of singular vous in French at least at about the same time French singular vous was coming into use. The first documented case of singular you dates from 1250, but documentary evidence of this form is rare until well into the following century (Finkenstaedt 1963: 50f). By Chaucer’s time singular ye-you (the Y-form) was common and can be seen in the words inviting the prioress to tell her story: “My lady Prioress, by your leve, / So that I wiste I shoulde yow nat greve, / I wolde demen that ye tellen shoulde / A tale next, if so were that ye wolde. / Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?” / “Gladly,” quod she, and seyde as ye shal here.” (Chaucer. Canterbury Tales, “The Prioresses Prologue,” late 14th century, ll. 1637-1642). T-forms were for people who were not present including those asleep, dead, or mad (Mazzon 2000: 138). “The addressing of women by men (husband-wife and other family relationship excepted) is almost invariably with Y (20 cases vs. only one T), regardless of whether the woman has a status that is superior, inferior, or roughly equivalent to that of the male character addressing her” (ibid.: 140). “At Chaucer’s time, Y-forms are well established as forms of deference and of respect, and are used rather regularly with one’s superiors, and increasingly with strangers ...” (ibid.: 144, cf. Strang 1970: 139). In the period of the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485) the ranks of the aristocracy were thinned considerably thus strengthening the position of the well-to-do middle classes who began increasingly to adopt the new forms of address of the nobility (whose ranks they began to replenish. By Shakespeare’s time use of thou-thee (the T-form) vs. the Y-form had spread into the higher bourgeois circles, as seen by its use in the Paston letters. T-forms are reserved for anger, contempt, or hostility. Hence singular you was
determined not just by social standing, but also by emotional state. Bruti has two main criteria: (1) social distance and (2) emotional attitude (2000: 35):

**Social distance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inferiors</th>
<th>Address to Equals</th>
<th>Superiors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thou &lt;---------------------</td>
<td>(Y/T)----------------</td>
<td>&gt; You</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emotional attitude**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>anger/contempt</th>
<th>indifference/neutrality</th>
<th>familiarity/intimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thou</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>&gt; Thou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 17th centuries we still find Oliver Cromwell’s wife addressing him with Y-forms but receiving T-forms in return (Finkenstaedt 1963: 111). Furthermore, throughout this time the use of the T-forms was reinforced by Puritan usage which emphasized their religious use (ibid.: 130). As the Puritans lost in influence when the Restoration (1660) came about, a more recent movement, that of the Quakers (the Society of Friends) seemed all the more visible, and one of its features was its insistence on using the T-forms. This was a conscious rejection of societal inequality and the vanity of titles and the Y-forms which the higher standing demanded be used in addressing them. The persistent use of *thou* and *thee* did not meet with widespread approval as the following autobiographical passage by Thomas Ellwood indicates. In it he describes a repeated encounter with his non-Quaker father, who demanded that he remove his hat in his presence and address him with ye or you:

As soon as he saw me standing with my hat on, his passion transporting him, he fell upon me with both his fists; and having by that means somewhat vented his anger, he plucked of my hat and threw it away. …

But whenever I had occasion to speak to my father, though I had no hat to offend him [he had taken to wearing a cap], yet my language did as much; for a durst not say you to him; but thou, or thee, as the occasion required, and then would he be sure to fall on me with his fist. (Ellwood 1848: 359, 365)

The direction of change in general has, of course, been to level usage to singular you. For a basic history of T and Y forms, see Brown and Gilman 1972, where the abbreviations used are T and V (for vous).

Some traditional dialects continue to use the 2nd person singular *thou*. This shows up in the Shetlands, where the initial consonant is /d/ instead of /ð/ and the vowel is unshifted /u:/ giving us *do*, which is incidentally the same as the German 2nd person nom. sg. pronoun (Melchers 1985: 93). In Yorkshire the consonant is /ð/ but the vowel is /a/, giving *tha* as in “Just asked where *tha* wa’ that’s all. What did *tha* run away for when *tha* saw him?” (Text 8.7, Hines. Kes, 1969).

**References**


The 2nd person plural pronoun you is undistinguished in StE from singular you except in reflective, where StE yourself vs. yourselves are distinct. Numerous GenE forms have restored the distinction by adding a distinct plural form, which is, however, not mandatory. Examples: you all, youse (various spellings), or you guys. The introduction of new distinct plural forms is a clear indication of the need many speakers feel to mark the number difference (personal pronoun systems).

Inclusive and exclusive pronouns refer to two distinct phenomena: (1) a distinction among 1st and 2nd person pronouns in which we and you may include or exclude the addressees. Example: Tok Pisin inclusive we is yumi and exclusive we is mipela. (2) a gender issue in which the use of what is called generic he is criticized because it is more exclusive of females than truly generic. Example: The final pronoun in Everyone looks out for himself may lead people to think of men only. Remedies vary, but the most widespread change in recent usage has been to replace himself with him- or herself or singular themselves (or themselves). A further alternative is to use oneself, but this cannot be extended to sentences such as the following: I asked everyone to leave his name with the secretary.

Reflective pronouns are a sub-grouping of the pronouns closely related to the personal pronouns. The reflectives are formed by adding sg. {-self} or plur. {-selves} to the possessive or the object form. Examples: myself, himself. Note that there is a tendency in non-standard GenE to form all the reflective pronouns from the possessive form. Examples: myself, yourself, hisself, herself, ourself or -selves, theirsself or –selves. Only the reflective forms of the 2nd person singular and plural are distinct in StE: yourself vs. yourselves. Reflective pronouns are employed in StE to refer to an NP which has already occurred in the same clause, cf.

The student hurt herself (the object herself refers, in the same clause, to the student)
The student asked whether we could help her (the object her occurs in a different clause than the student, and this prevents the use of the reflective)

Nonetheless, the use of reflexives in a spreading non-reflexive context is spreading. Example: Seeing that they are elected by ourselves, and represent us, … (Fritz 2006: 286). The source of this example, which comes from IrE, is attributed to older English usage and to the Gaelic substrate (Filppula 2004: 93; §8.4.2.2), but such usage is occurring more and more often in other Englishes. As with a number of other changes discussed in HoE the increasing spread of these forms may be attributed to their emphatic function.

Interrogative pronouns: a sub-grouping of the pronouns (and determiners). Examples: which, what, who, where, why, how (pronouns); which/what book (determiners). These pronouns have remained essentially the same since OE. Examples (OE/ModE): hwat-what, hwá-who, hwéer-where, hwý-why, hwéle-which, hwonne-when.

Relative pronouns: a sub-grouping of the pronouns divided among other things into ones with personal and with non-personal reference. Examples: personal: who(m); non-personal: which; both: whose, that. In OE the demonstratives se, seō, þat could be used as relative pronouns. ModE that goes back to OE þe, which was indeclinable; who derived from the interrogatory pronoun possibly influenced by French, where gui is both interrogatory and relative.

Indefinite pronouns: a sub-grouping of the pronouns (and determiners). Examples: each, every, any, some (pronouns) or the same with a following noun (determiners). These pronouns have remained essentially the same since OE. Examples (OE/ModE): ðér-every, ðe-each, anig-any, manig-many, nánig-not any, óder-(an)other, sum-some.

Conjunctions and connectors are part of the traditional PoS conjunctions. Many of them have remained unchanged since the OE period, e.g. ond “and,” náðor “neither,” and for “for.” On the other hand, such once widely used conjunctions as ac “but” and ér “before” have dropped out of use. The distinction between coordinate conjunctions (and, or, for, either, neither, and yet) and subordinate conjunctions (e.g. although, after, before, because, if, since) was more likely to affect word order in OE, where subordinate clauses frequently (but not always) have verb-final word order. Example: Gif cyning æt manes hām drincæđ … (Text 2.1, Ælænbirht’s Laws, 602 or 603, Law no. 3) “If the king at a man’s home drinketh … .” In ModE the type of conjunction affects word order only inasmuch as coordinate conjunctions must come between the clauses they connect while subordinate ones need not. Example with coordinate conjunction: Britain is 800 miles long, and it is 200 miles broad, but not *And it is 200 miles broad, Britain is 800 miles long. Example with a subordinate conjunction: If the king is drinking at a man’s home, and anyone commits any evil deed there, he is to pay twofold compensation. Here the conjunction comes initially. But it could also occur between the mains clauses and subordinate clause: A man is to pay twofold compensation if the king is drinking at his home and someone commits any evil deed there.

Prepositions are a part of speech or word class. English has a large number of prepositions, due perhaps to the typological shift from a synthetic (OE) to an analytic (ModE) language. Analytic languages depend on particles such as prepositions to carry grammatical meaning. Example: OE. wordum mælde (Text 3.3, “The Battle of Maldon,” late 11th century) consists of the dative plural of word; a ModE translation requires a preposition: spoke with words. Prepositions share with verbs the feature of taking objects. Their source lies in adverbs (before, after, near, etc.), participles (concerning, including, pertaining to, etc.), compound prepositions (out of, down from, within, etc.) and complex (in front of, in regard to, by means of, etc.) ones, i.e. one preposition in combination with another one.

In general, prepositions began to be employed more widely as the older functions of case retreated into the background. Consequently, their number, which was relatively small in OE, grew in the early ME period. Sources of new prepositions were both Old Norse (new fre; increased use of at and with) and
French (contre, mangre, sans, save; partly anglicized during, excepting, touching; calqued notwithstanding < OF non obstant; increased use of at) (cf. Mustanoja 1960: 348f). In expanded its scope, probably under the influence of Latin in and French en, encroaching on the territory of on (e.g. on his dagum becomes in his days). Several of the prepositions take over functions once carried by case alone. Of is increasingly used for the genitive. Functions of the dative such as the marking of the indirect object, in contrast, were now more often carried by the use of the prepositions to and for. The prepositional dative, still rare in the continuation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, grew to 10% of the total in the 13th century (Fischer 1992: 379f).


**Nouns** are a part of speech which refers to concrete and abstract entities. Example: concrete house and abstract truth. It was marked in OE by inflections for number and case and which stood in a relation of gender agreement with the determiners and adjectives which accompanied them. Number (singular and plural) has been retained, but case was reduced from a four- to five-case system in OE to the current two-case system, in which there is common case for all the cases except the possessive. See *secondary grammatical categories of the noun and pronoun* for more detail on gender, case, and number.

**Verbs** are a part of speech which typically designates actions and states. In OE the verbs underwent inflection for person (1st, 2nd, and 3rd), number (singular and plural), tense (present and past), and mood (indicative, subjunctive, imperative). In ModE little remains of these inflections, but many of the same distinctions are still made though more by means of syntactic constructions than inflection. See *secondary grammatical categories of the verb* for more detail on inflection, concord, tense, mood and modality, aspect, voice, and negation.

*(Grammar and grammars)  
(Grammatical categories)  
(Primary grammatical categories)  
**Secondary grammatical categories**  
Secondary grammatical categories of the noun and pronoun  
Secondary grammatical categories of the verb  
(Syntax)  
**Secondary grammatical categories** are relevant when speaking of nouns, pronouns, and verbs. In a more limited way adjectives and adverbs as well as determiners are also differentiated according to secondary grammatical categories, the former have the feature of comparison and some of the latter carry number and gender.

**Secondary grammatical categories of the noun and pronoun**  
Concord, aka agreement  
Noun Phrase (NP)  
Gender  
Case  
Number  
(Secordary grammatical categories of the verb)

**Concord, aka agreement**: a process in which two or more words show their relationship to each other in being marked for the same category such as number or person. Example: verb concord will be plural
if its subject is plural and singular if the subject is singular. Here we can speak of grammatical (plural) concord, e.g. *soldiers are ...*; the concord is notional if the meaning, but not the form of the subject is plural as in *police are ...* (see collective nouns). Finally, it is juxtapositional (by closeness) if the part of a multiple subject nearest the verb determines whether the verb should be singular or plural. Example: *Either the girls or the boy was there.*

Among the many cases of concord which are not strictly grammatical we find the re-analysis of the subjects with plural complex determiners, e.g. *A number* [singular, grammatically the subject] of *employees* [the notional subject] *have [not has] been dismissed.* In ModE speakers draw the line without worrying about consistency in either direction: *A row of houses was/were standing where cows had once grazed.* Plural expressions which are viewed as units take singular verbs, cf. *$1000 is a lot of money; toast and jelly is my favorite.*

(Concord, aka agreement)

**Noun Phrase (NP)**

**Declension**

*Weak nouns, weak adjective endings, and weak verbs*

(Concord, aka agreement)

**Noun Phrase (NP)** is a major structural unit of the sentence whose head (or most central element) is a noun or pronoun.

**Declension**: the set of *case, number, and gender* forms which a noun, a *determiner, an adjective, or a pronoun* may have. OE had four to five cases, three numbers, three genders. ModE has three cases for the *personal pronouns*, two for the noun, and none for adjectives and determiners. There are now only two number categories.

*Weak nouns, weak adjective endings, and weak verbs*: the designation given in OE to a class of “regular” *nouns*, i.e. ones ending in {-n} in most of the grammatical *cases*. Example: *nama “name”* (masc. nom. sg.) but *naman* (gen., dat., acc. sg.; nom. and acc. plur.); to the endings of adjectives preceded by a *determiner*. Example: *gōda “good”* (masc. nom. sg.) but *gōdan* (as with *naman*); to “regular” verbs, ones taking a {-d(e)} ending in the past and past participle. Example: *lufian “love”; lufode* (past); *lufad* (past participle).

(Concord, aka Agreement)

**Noun Phrase (NP)**

**Gender**

(Concord, aka Agreement)

**Gender** refers to (1) a *social category* according to which language use frequently varies. Example: lower middle class women seem to be more strongly oriented toward the overt norm than men of the same class; (2) a *grammatical category* with the terms masculine, feminine, and neuter, which are assigned to all nouns in some languages such as OE, Latin, German, and French (only masc. and fem.). In OE marking for gender was most consistently visible in the inflections of the determiners and adjectives which occurred together with nouns. The following paradigms illustrate this. In the first table the
definite (or strong) declension of the adjective “good” is given. Definite endings were used when the adjective was preceded by a specifier such as the *demonstrative* (see there and under *article* for paradigms).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>fem.</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nominative</td>
<td>ðoða</td>
<td>ðoðe</td>
<td>ðoðe</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genitive</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
<td>ðoðena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dative (+ instrumental)</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
<td>ðoðe</td>
<td>ðoðan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table: Definite declension (OE)**

There are relatively few distinct endings in the definite declension. Consequently, the marking has to depend on the determiner. The second table shows the indefinite (or weak) adjective paradigm using the adjective for “small.” This paradigm was used when there was no determiner or one which did not specify, such the indefinite *article*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>fem.</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nominative</td>
<td>smela</td>
<td>smale</td>
<td>smale</td>
<td>smalan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genitive</td>
<td>smalan</td>
<td>smalan</td>
<td>smalan</td>
<td>smalena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dative (= instrumental)</td>
<td>smalan</td>
<td>smalan</td>
<td>smalan</td>
<td>smalum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>smalan</td>
<td>smalan</td>
<td>smale</td>
<td>smalan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table: Indefinite declension (OE)**

During the ME period these paradigms were largely leveled so that ModE has marking for grammatical gender only in the 3rd person singular of the *personal pronoun system*.

In OE gender was assigned to all nouns in a manner inherited from Indo-European. In its basic outline this was a *count* vs. *mass* distinction, where animate was masculine with the subcategory feminine for female humans and both stood in contrast to inanimate, which was neuter (Wagner 2004: 481f). Some OE examples are masculine *dryhten* “lord, ruler,” *drinc* “drink”; feminine *bædýðge* “lady,” *duggð* “retainer, people, nobles,” *dice* “duck,” or *duru* “door”; and neuter *drincfæt* “drinking vessel,” *důst* “dust,” but also *wif* “woman” or *cild* “child.” Consequently, there was a certain, though somewhat narrow basis for identifying grammatical gender with biological sex. Yet even in OE times there are instances in which a non-feminine antecedent with reference to a female person was followed by a feminine pronoun. As Strang remarks, “By 1170 it was broadly true that if reference to a person was involved, natural gender took priority; . . . . By 1370 the conception of grammatical gender was hardly relevant to English” (1970: 265). The following OE passage may represent such a case, where *wælgæst* is masculine but further reference is feminine (*hēo*) because the deeper textual reference is to Grendel’s mother:

*Weārð him on Heorot to handbanan*  *It happened to him in Heorot at the hand of a killer,*

*aetl æs wælcan*   *Atol æs wlanc*    *Boasting of the horrible prey (she) went (her) way back to*
Eventually there was a fundamental shift from the traditional gender system to one based on the feature [±human]. This led to a loss of the old masculine-feminine-neuter distinction and the establishment of a personal-non-personal one, as shows up in the new distinction between who and which or between somebody and something. Within the personal category sex-based reference further distinguished masculine and feminine. From a purely linguistic perspective it is only possible to confirm these changes and to attribute them to some underlying and somewhat mystic (or mystifying) force of linguistic drift.

The shift is, however, not complete inasmuch as ModE uses masculine and feminine pronouns to refer to non-humans. This is most obvious in the case of higher animals and pets. Many of the former have stereotypical gender: cats are most frequently she, and dogs and horses are he. Pets are often referred to as he and she, usually according to the sex they are known to have. Countries may be feminine; ships, cars, and other machines which earn the love and respect (esp. of men) are also feminine. In English West Country dialect a very different system has been maintained in which every object which has a shape of its own (dead or alive) is either masculine or feminine; nearly always the former, e.g. pitcher, tool, book, house, coat, cat, letter = he. In contrast, it is impersonal or abstract, used to express an action or a noun of the undefined sort, such as water, snow, air, weather, hay, beer.


(Concord, aka agreement)
(Noun Phrase (NP))
(Gender)
Case

What is the order of the cases in declension paradigms?

Pronoun case leveling
Nominative you
Disjunctive pronouns
Coordinate subject pronouns

(Number)

Case is a grammatical feature of OE noun phrases (NPs) in which not only the noun head, but also the adjectives and determiners preceding it are marked for the cases nominative (for sentence subjects), genitive (for possession), dative (for indirect objects), and accusative (for direct objects). OE examples: scip (nom./acc. sg.), but scepe (dat. sg.) and scipes (gen. sg.). The following is the most frequently quoted example of a noun declensional paradigm, the first, or a-declension:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nominative</td>
<td>stōl</td>
<td>stōlas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genitive</td>
<td>stōles</td>
<td>stōla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dative (+ instrumental)</td>
<td>stōle</td>
<td>stōla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Concord, aka agreement)
(Noun Phrase (NP))
(Gender)
Case
accusative  stōl  stōlas

By ModE times only the genitive (= possessive) continued to be marked with the inflection {-s}. ModE has three cases for the **personal pronouns**: nominative/subject, genitive/possessive, and accusative/object, two for the noun (common case and possessive). Adjectives and determiners no longer carry case inflections.

The function of the cases is difficult to define in a final way. The **nominative** is the normal case of the subject while the **dative** is either an indirect object or the direct object of a “dative” verb, e.g. *belpan* with a dative object such as *hīm* (not accusative *hīnen*) in *ond be hīm helpe ne mæg*, literally “and he could not help to him” (*Beowulf*, l. 2448). The **genitive** indicates possession or attribution of something to something else. Example: *Godes feoh* “the property of God” (Text 2.1: Æðelbearht’s Laws, 602 or 603, Law 1). The accusative is most frequently the direct object of a verb. Examples: *ond dæge or æle dun hine* “took down they him” (Text 2.2 Ruthwell Cross, 7th century). Verbs take objectives chiefly in the accusative, but also in the dative and even, sometimes, in the genitive case. The same applies to the preposition.

**What is the order of the cases in declension paradigms?** This varies from country to country, and there is no single international standard of practice. In the U.K. and many of the Commonwealth countries the listing is in the following order (the cases in parentheses occur in Latin, but not in OE):

- **Nominative** (Vocative)  
- **Accusative**  
- **Genitive**  
- **Dative**  
- **Instrumental**/(Ablative  
- **Locative)**

This order derives from H. Kennedy’s *Latin Primer* (1866). It derives its justification from the fact that it puts cases with similar endings close together. For example, the Latin nominative and vocative differ only for the masculine singular, and the nominative and accusative neuter singular are the same. This latter point applies to OE as well.

The major alternative to this (adopted in this book) is the following sequence

- **Nominative** Genitive Dative Accusative Instrumental/(Ablative  
- **Locative)**

which goes back to the practice of the Byzantine grammarians describing Greek. This is standard in the U.S. (and also in Poland, the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy among others) (Latin Declension: 2011). The term *declension* comes from the Latin word for “decline,” *declināre* and can be explained as resulting from the conception that each of cases besides the nominative (and possibly vocative) has fallen away (*casus*, Latin for *case*, means “to fall”). The nominative is upright; the others are oblique. Furthermore, they carry *inflection*, literally “bending.”


**Pronoun case leveling**: the process in which case distinctions gradually ceased to be maintained. Case leveling has led to the replacement of the nominative by the accusative of some of the **personal pronouns**. Examples: *ye* (nom.) has yielded to *you* (orig. only acc.). It has also moved in the opposite directions in **pronoun exchange**. Example: *just between you and I*.

**Nominative you** is one result of **pronoun case leveling**. It comprises the use of a once exclusively accusative/object form as a subject. A similar tendency applies to other accusative **personal pronouns**.
as well, especially conjoined subjects. Example: *Me and him are goin’ out* (often regarded as non-standard). Developed along with the wider and wider use of *ye/you* rather than *thou/thee*.

Originally *you* was the accusative or object form. The spread to use in the subject function transpired between 1520 and 1600. Londoners, for example, moved to a 50:50 division between *ye* and *you* as subject between 1520 and 1559 when nominative *you* had a frequency of only about one-tenth in the North and East Anglia. There is no dialectal basis for the *ye-you* variation; rather, London played the leading role (Nevalainen and H. Raumolin-Brunberg 2000: 322f).

In the English of at least some Quakers we find the same process in the leveling of *thou-thee* to the single form *thee*, cf. the usage of Phineas, a Quaker in H.B. Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1851-52): "*Thee’s* quite welcome to do the fighting, George," said Phineas, chewing some checkerberry-leaves as he spoke: "but I may have the fun of looking on…. Had n’t *thee* better give ’em a word of advice, before they come up, just to tell ’em handsomely they ’ll be shot if they do?" (chap. 17).


**Disjunctive pronouns** are the use of the accusative/object form of the personal pronouns (*me, him, her, us, them*) when standing alone (or disjoined). This is the case (1) after the verb *be*, as in *That’s me/him/her/et c.* where strictly grammatical use of case would dictate the nominative/subject form (*That’s I*). In English pidgins and creoles there is frequently a leveling of the nominative-accusative distinction to a single case, usually the disjunctive form as in Guyanese CE *Wel mii no noo wisaid den de for StE Well I don’t know where they are now*. See also *coordinate subject pronouns*.

**Coordinate subject pronouns** are a further GenE use of the disjunctive pronoun forms. Informal English abounds with them when conjoined as the subject, e.g. *Me and him are good friends*. Although some consider such practice to be a violation of “good grammar,” this usage is very common in colloquial speech. The use of these forms, which are emphatic, occurs not only when they are a member of a conjoined subject, but also when they stand alone, as in *Who’s there? – Me*, or in post-verbal position (*It’s me*). In many of the non-standard vernaculars the emphatic disjunctive pronoun is not always the object form (*You can come with we…*) as it is in GenE. This goes one step further in showing the importance of function (emphasis) over mere form (grammatical case) (Beal 2004: 117f).

Number is a secondary grammatical category. Its usual terms are singular and plural, but some languages also have dual for two and trial for three. Examples: OE had the dual personal pronouns, wit “we two” and git “you two.” Example: William the Conqueror’s first edict after the Conquest was issued in Latin and English (and not in French). In it he addressed Bishop William and Gosfreg as follows, And ic cyde eow, þæt ic wylle, þæt get been salira þæra laga wroðde, þe gyt waðan on Eadwerdes dæge kynge (Liebermann 1903-1916: 224) “And I made known to you that I demand that you both be worthy of all these laws, which you both were in the days of King Edward.” ModE has remnants of the dual in words like either, neither, and both. Tok Pisin has 3rd person, singular em, dual tupela, trial tripela, and plural ol.


Count and mass nouns make up a subdivision of nouns according to whether they may take a plural (= count) or not (= mass). Examples: count: books, words; mass: printed matter. This distinction depends on specific vs. generic reference. Mass nouns, esp. drinkable liquids such as beer, milk, water, wine, and the like frequently undergo secondary shift and become countable, as when someone orders a beer and two whiskeys. In the area of English for Specific Purposes this comes out in the greater use of ”new plurals,” e.g. fats, oils, greases, etc., (cf. Gerbert 1970: 40).


Collective nouns are singular nouns which designate groupings of more than one member. Examples: committee, team, etc. With the loss of case marking of the noun, adjective, and determiner, grammatical concord grew more tenuous. Just as “natural gender” largely replaced grammatical gender, so, too, did notional concord begin to oust grammatical concord. National difference show up here, where collective nouns like team (and the names of teams) more generally take the plural in BrE, but the singular in AmE, cf. The team was/were having a good season. Findings for BrE:

- over 80% singular concord: audience, board, committee, government, jury, public
- over 80% plural: staff
- both singular and plural commonly used: crew, family (Biber et al. 1999: §3.9.2.3)


Singular and plural demonstratives underwent changes from OE to ME. They function as pronouns and as determiners and are the only determiners which, for example in contrast to the definite article, which has taken on a single form (the /ðiː - ða:/), have retained distinct singular and plural forms: this-these and that-those. There was a split in the OE demonstrative paradigm resulting in the newly developed system of the definite article (see articles), on the one hand, and the demonstrative, on the other. In the latter case, that (plural tho, later those) took on the meaning of deictic distance in the 12th century. The second of the two deictic determiners was generalized from pis, the nominative and accusative singular of the emphatic OE demonstrative to which the plural adjectival ending –e was added giving us the pair this/these (Lass 1992: 2.9.1.2).

(Secondary grammatical categories of the noun and pronoun)

Secondary grammatical categories of the verb

Inflection
Tense-Modality-Aspect (TMA)
Voice
Negation

Secondary grammatical categories of the verb include number, TMA (tense, modality, and aspect), and voice. These categories are realized both by inflection and by periphrastic constructions. While marking for number has been largely, but not completely, lost, the TMA categories of have undergone varying degrees of expansion.

Inflection in English

Verb classes of OE
Verb classes of ModE
Principal parts
Reduction of strong verb forms
Preterite-present verbs
Participles
Number
(Tense-Modality-Aspect (TMA))
(Voice)
(Negation)

Inflection in English is centered chiefly around the grammatical endings added to verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. In comparison to other languages, ModE has very few inflections. It has undergone a long-term shift from a high degree of inflection (typical of synthetic languages) to periphrastic structures (typical of analytic languages). Example: the comparative of the adjective in {-er} as in clearer is inflectional and hence synthetic; the comparative with {more} is analytic as in more clear. The different word forms of the personal pronouns (e.g. I, me) are also regarded as inflections. For more on verb inflection, see verb classes of OE and of ModE, preterite-present verbs, and concord. For examples of inflectional paradigms see articles, determiners, gender, and case.

Verb classes of OE are basically divided into weak verbs and strong ones. The former mark the past and past participle with an ending, either {-d(e)}, as with luftan-lufode-(ge)luftod “love,” or {-t(e)}, as with mētan-mētt-mēto “meet” or bringan-brōhte-(ge)brōht “bring.” The strong verbs undergo vowel gradation or ablaut. Seven classes are commonly recognized. Examples: I. “bid” bīdan-bād-bidon-biden; II. “offer” bōdan-bōad-bōdon-bōden; III. “bind” bindan-bānd-bāndon-bānder; IV. “bear” beran-bær-bærən-boren; V. “give” giefan-geaf-gēafon-giefen; VI. “stand” standan-stōd-stōdon-stōden; VII. “fall” feallan-fēoll-fēolloon-feallen. A third set of verbs recognized for OE are the irregular verbs, which include brōn/wesan “be,” willan “will, wish,” dōn “do,” gān “go,” perhaps habben “have,” as well as the preterite-present verbs (cf. the ModE modal auxiliaries).

Verb classes of ModE are the one-time weak verbs, now labeled regular because they all take the {-ed} ending in the past and past participial forms with no change in the verb stem. Some of the weak verbs of OE, namely those which formed the past and past participle with {-t(e)} continue to do so and may
show a vowel change from the present to the past and past participle, but are now counted as irregular. Example: *keep-kept-kept* or *dream-dreamt-dreamt*. The **irregular** verbs of ModE are the one-time strong verbs of OE plus numerous once weak verbs such as those just listed or ones like *buy-bought-bought* and *sell-sold-sold*, as well as the irregular verbs of OE. For examples of the strong and the weak conjugations, see principal parts.

**Principal parts** are the inflectional forms of the verb base to which conjugational inflections (see also concord) may be added. There are four such forms for the strong verbs of OE and three for the weak verbs as in ModE: the infinitive, the past (for OE strong verbs two forms), and past participle.

The weak (sometimes also called consonantal) verbs are what today are called the regular verbs, that is, the ones that have a regular past tense and past participle, namely {-ed}. In OE the vast majority of verbs were weak, though not regular in the sense we are familiar with since they also included cases of vowel and consonant change. The past and past participle endings were, however, often the almost familiar inflections {-ode} and {-od} respectively. Example: *wunian* “help”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>past</th>
<th>past participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(ge)wunian</td>
<td>(ge)wunode</td>
<td>(ge)wunod</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The strong (or vocalic) type of verb depended on a variety of patterns of vowel change and had one further distinctive form due to the fact that the past singular and the past plural had different vowels. Examples: OE *drincan-dranc-druncon-druncan*; ModE: *drink-drank-drunk*. Those OE strong verbs had two distinct past tense forms: the first (*dranc* above) was for the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} persons singular, and the second past form (*druncan*) was for the 2\textsuperscript{nd} person singular and the plural in all persons, cf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person + number</th>
<th>past (strong verbs)</th>
<th>past (weak verbs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} person sg.</td>
<td>ic, hè / hēo / hit drāf</td>
<td>ic, hè, hēo (hit) lufode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} person sg.</td>
<td>þū drīfē</td>
<td>þū lufodest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} plur.</td>
<td>wē / gē / hī drīfen</td>
<td>wē / gē / hī lufoden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: The past indicative paradigm (see also concord in the verb and subjunctive).

The irregular verbs are a diverse set. The most central of them is the verb *be*, which remains the most irregular in ModE as well. Next to the present indicative *eom, eart, īs, sinu* (*am, art, is, are*) there is an alternative paradigm *bēo, bīst, bīð, bīōd*. The past has 1\textsuperscript{st} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} p. sg. *wæs*, 2\textsuperscript{nd} p. sg. *wēre* and pl. *wērōn*.

The subjunctive has its own paradigms: present singular *sī* and plural *sīn* or *bēo* and *bēon* and past singular *wēre* and plural *wērōn*.

There is widespread agreement about the forms of the ModE principal parts in StE. In *non-standard GenE* (e.g. 10.2.3, Table 10.3) and in the *traditional dialects* (8.2.7.1), however, their development has often been different.

**Reduction of strong verb forms** has to do with the leveling of the four ablaut distinctions in the principal parts of strong verbs in OE (see *verb classes of OE*). The resulting forms may retain three, two, or no different vowels. Examples: *sing-sang-sung, sting-stung-stung, set-set-set*. Some verbs vary between regular and irregular principal parts in standard ModE. Examples: *dreamt and dreamed, dove and dired, woke* and *waked*. Non-standard and regional forms may vary from StE. The use of past tense forms
such as *drunk* in non-standard GenE results from a different choice of form for the past tense, viz. generalization of *drunmon* rather than *dranc* (see *principle parts*).

These forms have as a group undergone a high degree of regularization as a large number of OE *irregular* (or *strong*) verbs have become ModE *regular* (ora weak) ones (see verb classes of OE and of ModE). Example: *belpan-baedp-belpen-belpen* has become *help-helped-helped* in StE. Of the more than 300 strong verbs of OE only around half are still irregular. The present irregular verbs consist of those with no variation (*put-put-put*), with two forms (*send-sent-sent*), and those with three distinct forms (*draw-drew-drawn*). Only the verb *be* has retained four distinct forms (*be-was-were-gone*). While most of the changes in principal parts led to regularization, there are occasional examples of the adoption of irregular forms for a verb which might be expected to be regular. Example: *dig-dug-dug*, a verb presumably borrowed from French (*diger* “to hollow out, to make a dike”).

**Preterite-present verbs** are a small group of verbs whose original past (aka *preterite*) form took on a present tense meaning in Proto-Germanic. As one result, the 3rd p. sg. has no ending, which was the pattern with the past tense of the strong verbs. Consequently, ModE verbs of this class also have no {-s} in the 3rd p. sg. OE examples: *witan* “know” with 1st and 3rd p.sg. *wat* but plural *witon, ōgan* “have” with *āb* but *āgor, cunnan* “be able” with *cunn* but *cunnor, magan* “be able” with *mæg* but *magon, sculan* “have to” with *sceal* but *sclon*. New weak class past tense forms emerged to fill the gap; they were most often, but not exclusively formed on the pattern of the weak verbs with the inflection {-te}, for the verbs listed above: *wiste, ǣhte, cūke, meahte, and sceolde*. ModE no longer has the vowel distinction, but does have non-inflected forms throughout the present tense. The ModE preterite present verbs are all modal auxiliaries. Examples: *can, may, must, shall, will*.

As the two lists for OE and ModE (both not complete) reveal, the actual members of the preterite present group differ. *Witan* and *āgan* have dropped out of the language, as have several others. On the other hand, ModE – though not StE – is in the process of adding a new preterite-present verb: *got*. Example: *But I don’t got it in me no more to fight* (R. Skloot (2010) *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, N.Y.: Crown, 11), where *got* is used as an infinitive and the 3rd p. sg. present tense is the question as to whether the speaker *got* it her or not. Furthermore, non-standard GenE *got*, esp. in the form *gotta*, is often modal, cf. *He gotta do it*.

**Participles** occur in two forms. The one is the present participle, which ends in ModE in {-ing}.

Examples: *being, going, running, or looking*. The other is the past participle, which is the final principal part (of four among the OE strong verbs or of three among the ModE principal parts). Examples: *been, gone, ran, or looked*. Both stand between the major lexical word classes of verb and adjective. In OE adjectival participles took the appropriate inflections. Example: *pæt ge mid urum sceattum to scype gangon unbefohtene* “that you, unfought against, should go to your ship” (Text 3.3 “The Battle of Maldon,” late 11th century). Here *unbefohtene* ends in the nominative plural weak adjective ending. Used as a verb form we might find something like the following passive (according to Ælfic: *iæ com gealfod* “Latin “amor”; ModE “I am loved.” The present participle does not really enter into what might truly be considered the progressive; rather, it is adjectival. Example: *murnende mod* “grieving mood” (*Beowulf*, 1.
50). Not until the EModE period did the frequency of **periphrastic structures**, in which the participles took on a clearly verbal function, increase significantly.

(Verb classes of OE)  
(Verb classes of ModE)  
(Principal parts)  
(Reduction of strong verb forms)  
(Preterite-present verbs)  
(Participles)  

**Number in the VP**  
Concord  
Present-tense {s}  
Invariant be  
Plural {-s} and {-th}  
Northern Subject Rule

**Number in the VP** is a secondary grammatical category (see also **number**). The inflections of the verb distinguish singular and plural. Examples: OE 3rd person singular, present tense *Gif cyning his leode to him gehāte* “If the king orders his people to him” (Text 2.1: *Æðelbīrt*’s *Laws*, 602 or 603, Law no. 3) vs. 1st person plural, present tense *we eow fultumiad* “we (will) help you” (Text 2.5 *ASChronicle*, 9th century). ME examples: *bough that my brother Edmonde doth* (Text 5.5, Paston letter, 1485, l. 2) with the ending {-th} vs. 3rd person plural, present tense *men seye* (ibid.: l. 8) with zero ending (assuming that the final <e> is silent by 1485). ModE has {-s} in the 3rd p.sg. (see present tense {-s} and concord in the verb).

**Concord in the verb** involves both **number** and **person**. The basic paradigms for the past tense are given under **principal parts**. While the past uses the same inflections for the 1st and the 3rd persons singular, the present distinguishes them. Furthermore, in the present tense the 2nd person singular always has the {-st} ending (with or without a preceding vowel) in contrast to the 2nd p.sg. past tense of the strong verbs, which ends in {-e}. In both the past and the present tenses the plural uses the same endings for all persons, cf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person + number</th>
<th>present (strong verbs)</th>
<th>present (weak verbs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person sg.</td>
<td>ic drīfe</td>
<td>ic lufie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person sg.</td>
<td>þū drīfstan</td>
<td>þū lufandan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person sg.</td>
<td>hē / hēo / hit drīfe</td>
<td>hē, hēo (hit) lufað</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st, 2nd, 3rd plur.</td>
<td>wē / gē / hit drīfand</td>
<td>wē / gē / hit lufað</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table**: The present indicative paradigm (see also **principal parts** and **subjunctive**).

**Present-tense {s}** may be used with a subject in any person and number in non-standard varieties and informal usage, perhaps with a restriction to narratives or the verb *say*. Example: … and then I says… It is not clear just what the origins of this usage is, but support for universal {-s} is found in the **Northern Subject Rule** and is claimed for Scottish English, a Northern variety, by Catford (1957: 110), who refers to this as “narrative tense.” Examples: *I comes; we says* (both from ibid.).

In **AAVE**, in contrast, there is presumed to be no present tense {-s} (Dillard 1973: 42; Labov 1987: 8).

Example: They **pass** the wagon and I **speak**. The lady **speak** pleasant. My little girl she **look** up and sort of
frown (Text 10.7, Walker. *The Color Purple*, 1982). Yet {-s} actually turns up in all persons on occasion. This is credited to uncertainty due to code-switching with StE. Example: *They say we git smarter than they was if we learn anything, but we slips around and gits hold of that Webster’s old blue-back speller and we hides it tell ‘way in the night and then we lights a little pine torch, and studies that spelling book. We learn it too.* (Botkin. “[J. Proctor: Alabama],” 1936-1939: 91). As this quotation indicates, there seems to be little consistency in the choice of inflection, which offers at least indirect support for the code-switching hypothesis. In one report the absence of {-s} lies at about 75% for LWC speakers in the North; approx. 50% for the South (Wilmington, NC). This raises the question as to whether Northern speakers are diverging or Southern ones, converging with the White English Vernacular (Butters 1989: 104). In Bryan, Miss (Deep South) Black children have less than 15% {-s}; White ones, about 85% (ibid.: 107).

Labov, William. ”Are Black and White Vernaculars Diverging?” *American Speech* 62, 5-12.

**Invariant be** is the use of uninflected be in AAVE to indicate repeated or *habitual* state. Example: *they always be talkin’*. This is a feature of AAVE which does not seem to be inherited from the Caribbean creoles, as much else perhaps has been. It is favored among younger females and occurs most frequently in progressive constructions. Example: *When people ask – and seems like people always be askin* … (R. Skloot (2010) *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.* N.Y.: Crown, 11).

**Plural {-s} and {-th}** were found in earlier present tense Northern and Southern (respectively) plural verb inflections. Examples: OE *Hi willað eow to gefolo garas syllan,… “They want to give you as tribute spears,…”* (Text 3.3, “The Battle of Maldon,” late 11th century). In ME we find in the “Wife of Bath’s Tale” in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (late 14th century) toward the end a passage where the cran-e-fairy says, “*Now chees your-selven, whether that yow lyketh*” (l. 1227). In the EModE period there is significant documentation of {-s} or {-th} plurals only in the early 16th century. A look at twelve letters in the Plumpton correspondence, representing eastern usage between 1502 and 1536, provides 29 cases of present-tense plural verbs: {-s} occurs 31% of the time while {-th} has a frequency of only 20.7%, but the favored form is zero (48.3%). The available evidence indicates that plural {-s} entered Southern usage later than 3rd person singular {-s} and caught on less completely (Lass 1999: 166). The following are examples of inflected plural verbs quoted from Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg:

for Saint Gregorie sayeth that we ar more bounde to *them that bringeth* us up wel than to our parents, for our parents do that which is natural for them, that is *bringeth* us into this Worlde (Original 2, Princess Elizabeth, 154, 1548)

**The judges gifues** her no favour, for they say they understand by credible informations that ...
(Plumpton, Godfrey Greene, 35, 1476?) (2000: 283)
The ME Northern paradigm had \{s\} in the present indicative plural when the subject was not a personal pronoun in direct contact with the verb. This is known as the Northern Subject Rule, cf. “when sorrows comes, they come not single spies” (Hamlet IV: v. l. 74 (Folio) (qtd. from Lass 1999: 185; cf. Nevalainen and H. Raumolin-Brunberg 2000: 312)


**Northern Subject Rule** (aka Singular Concord Rule) is a formulation of the observation that in the English of Northern England (and presumably Scotland as well) a plural subject takes a verb ending in \{-s\} if the subject is a singular or plural noun or demonstrative, interrogatory, or relative pronoun, or even a plural personal pronoun if the latter is separated from the verb by intervening words (Poplack, Van Herk, Harvie 2002: 106f). Example: “Do you know?” – “No, an’ there’s not many that does” (B. Hines. Kes. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969, 31).


(Inflection)

**Periphrastic structures**

- Auxiliary verbs
  - NICE
- Pre-verbal markers
  - Auxiliary or periphrastic *do*
- Periphrastic *be going to*

(TMA)

(Voice)

(Negation)

Periphrastic structures, which increased in frequency throughout the ME and EModE periods, are one of the most visible indications of the typological shift in English from the synthetic to the analytic organization of grammatical information. In order for this to happen it was necessary for a fairly wide selection of verbs to grammaticalize into auxiliaries. The latter, in turn, could be used to signal what previously was expressed by inflections or lexically. Higher frequencies of periphrasis show up in the increasing use of both the primary auxiliaries *be* (for passive, perfect, and the progressive), *have* (for the perfect), and *do* (for questions, negation, and affirmation) and in the secondary, or modal, auxiliaries, chiefly *can, will, may, shall*, and *must* (see preterite present verbs). The subjunctive, for instance, made use of inflections to call the truth value of a statement into doubt. Gradually the subjunctive was replaced by modal auxiliary constructions. Example: ModE has the fossilized (and synthetic) subjunctive *Long live the king!*, where the analytic modal expression *May the king live long!* is much more transparent.
**Auxiliary verbs** are grammaticalized verbs with little or no lexical-semantic content, but a high degree of grammatical meaning. They consist of the primary auxiliaries be (for passive, perfect, and the progressive), have (for the perfect), and do (for questions with inverted word order, negation, and affirmation) and in the secondary, or modal, auxiliaries, chiefly can, will, may, shall, and must (see preterite present verbs, and the modal auxiliaries. The wider use of the auxiliary verbs emerged in the ME and EModE periods.

**NICE:** the features associated with auxiliary verbs, direct negation with periphrastic do; inversion in questions; use as code for the short forms; use for emphatic affirmation. Examples: They can’t come (N); Did she leave? (I); Yes, she did (C); They may return soon (E). Although the NICE features are a useful way of distinguishing auxiliary from lexical verbs, quite a number of verbs which are not subject to the NICE features do, in fact, have auxiliary-like functions. This is most clearly the case with get when used to introduce the dynamic passive. Example: They got married, which designates an act without the ambiguity of They were married, which may be used for an act or for the state of not being single.

**Pre-verbal markers** are words which indicate verb categories such as TMA, but also negation. In creolization such markers are placed immediately before the lexical verb, in the case of TMA usually in this order. Example: Belize CE we mi (= T; past) de (= A; progressive) luk fu rowp (Holm 1989: 279). Some scholars have speculated on the universality of both the categories and their sequence (cf. esp. Bickerton’s bioprogram). Such a hypothesis is attractive, but also very difficult to substantiate.


**Auxiliary or periphrastic do** the grammatical (auxiliary) verb used with lexical verbs to forms negations, questions, and emphatic forms. The auxiliary do carries inflection for person, i.e. present-tense {-s} or zero or for tense {did} in the past. Examples: Does she like history or doesn’t she? Yes, she really does! See also auxiliary verbs and NICE. In some varieties periphrastic do is used to mark habitual aspect, and in EModE it was also used in non-emphatic affirmative statements.

As the OE system of aspectual prefixes grew obsolescent, there was a need for new ways of marking aspect. One of these would have been causative do + infinitive to mark perfect aspect. This means that this construction would only appear with telic (goal-directed) and punctual verbs, not with state and activity verbs. This, then, would explain why do did not for a long time co-occur with be and have and still does not co-occur with the auxiliaries, “i.e. precisely those verbs that do not show do-support once do has become grammaticalized,” and has lost its causative-perfective coloring (Fischer 1992: 267-275).

**Periphrastic be going to:** a means of expressing the future. It emphasizes the subject’s intention or the inevitability of a future action. Example: He’s going to buy a computer. It’s going to rain. It offers an excellent example of grammaticalization, as can be seen by the way it fulfills the criteria listed there.

(i) layering and coexistence of older and newer forms: will next to be going to;

(ii) divergence - an item splits into a lexical and a (new) grammatical item: go “to move (away from speaker)” vs. going(to) “intended or certain future action”;

(iii) specialization - the variety of formal choices narrows; a smaller number of forms assume more general grammatical meanings: only go; not leave, drive, hurry, etc.;
(iv) obligatorification: not necessarily the case;
(v) reanalysis: \( \text{going to do something} \rightarrow \text{going to + do something} \);
(vi) coalescence: \( \text{going to} \rightarrow \text{gona} \);
(vii) (further) condensation to \( \text{gon} \) (in some dialects such as AAVE);
(viii) persistence – of traces of the original lexical meanings: “be going to see someone” is ambiguous for movement and for intentional future;
(ix) fixation: no object may come between \( \text{go} \text{nnna} \) and the infinitive;
(x) paradigmatization: not necessarily the case;
(xi) de-categorialization: loss of use with most complex verb forms, as with \*I had been going to see him.

(Inflection)
(Periphrastic structures)
TMA
- Tense
- Modality
- Aspect
(Voice)
(Negation)

**TMA (tense, modality, aspect)** are categories of the verb which may be **universals**. The **bioprogram** gives them considerable prominence as default categories which human beings draw on in rapid **creolization**, i.e. creolization from a basis which is not an already **stable extended pidgin** and affecting the **pre-verbal markers** of these categories. See also **tense**, **modality**, and **aspect**. In the history of English there has been considerable change within the TMA system, and ModE does not, in all its varieties, present a unified picture.

Tense and aspect markers are frequently borrowed from specific spatial configurations and modals for terms for possession or desire. The process is driven by discourse-pragmatic pressure, i.e. the need to be informative, to produce processable messages, and be expressive. Possibly there is a natural propensity to signal metalinguistic relations non-lexically (Traugott/Heine 1991: 8-9).

**Universal grammatical categories.** Some of the categories assumed to belong to the bioprogram are: (1) word class assignment (esp. verb vs. non-verb), (2) specificity (generic, indefinite, definite), (3) anteriority (tense), (4) completeness (aspect), (5) potentiality (future-irrealis), (6) CVCV [alternations of consonant and vowel] phonology, and (7) SVO word order. If the source language morphemes for “certain minimal functions” are lost, lexical forms will be adopted to fulfill them. TMA examples include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>anterior marker</th>
<th>(&lt; ) past participle of the copula</th>
<th>(\text{bin(a)}) (&lt;) English \text{been}: \text{dis bina won maan}.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modality</td>
<td>irrealis complemetizer</td>
<td>(&lt; ) superstrate for “for”</td>
<td>(\text{fu}. \text{&quot;ongkll! yu waaan dis reezo fu piil yu kooknot?&quot;})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspect</td>
<td>completive marker</td>
<td>(&lt; ) superstrate for “to finish”</td>
<td>(\text{don} \text{&lt; done}: \text{wen ii don piil am})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-punctual marker</td>
<td>(&lt; ) superstrate for location</td>
<td>(\text{de, e, a} \text{&lt; there well ii a piil kookno})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table:** Superstrate sources of grammatical items. All examples from Rickford 1987.
Relative sequence of TMA particles. Probably every creole realizes the categories of tense, modality, and aspect. What is especially remarkable is that combinations of two or more of these categories show up in the same relative order: tense before modality before aspect in pre-verbal position. “A majority of creoles, like HCE, express tense, modality, and aspect by means of three preverbal free morphemes. Placed (if they co-occur) in that order” (Bickerton 1981: 58). Voorhoeve has shown this for Sranan, the English-lexifier creole of Suriname.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TMA</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Specified by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>waka</td>
<td>“have walked”</td>
<td>(completive present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-waka</td>
<td>“is walking”</td>
<td>e = progressive marker (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa-waka</td>
<td>“will walk”</td>
<td>sa = future or irrealis marker (&lt; shall) (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ben waka</td>
<td>“walked”</td>
<td>ben = past marker (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ben-sa waka</td>
<td>“would have walked”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ben-e waka</td>
<td>“was walking”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ben-sa-e waka</td>
<td>“would have to keep walking”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa-e-waka</td>
<td>“will be walking”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.10: The relative order of the TMA elements in Sranan.

Tense

Verbal deixis

(Modality)

(Aspect)

Tense is a deictic instrument which locates a situation above all in time. From a morphological point of view, tense in English is a category with only two terms: present/unmarked/non–remote and past/marked/remote. Many people think, however, in a three-term way: past-present-future. Nevertheless, future is not morphologically or systematically marked in English; rather, the future is indicated in a variety of ways, such as by using a modal auxiliary, a periphrastic structure, or by using the simple or progressive forms in the appropriate context. (Tense is also a feature of the vowel which stands in contrast to lax.)

In OE we can find the modal future alongside of the morphological present and past tenses. Examples:

**Present tense:** Britene igland is etha bund mila lang; past: Erest weron bygend þises landes Brittes; modal future: þer ge magon eardian gif ge willað (Text 2.5, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 9th century).

In ME the situation was not decisively different. The use of auxiliary verbs was still emerging, but the preterite-present verbs (mostly modals) were already quite prominent and the perfect was developing as an alternative way of designating past time. Examples: **present tense:** And smale fowles maken melodye (l. 9); past: In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay / Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage … (20f); but also the perfect: Whan that Aprille with his shounes sote / The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote (1f; much as in ModE) or: The holy blissful martir for to seke, / That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke (17f; for past time and no longer possible in ModE); modal future: Wel nyne and twenty in a companye /…/ That toward Canterbury wolden ryde (24, 27) (Chaucer. Canterbury Tales, “Prologue,” late 14th century). By the end of EModE period the use of tense was essentially as it is today. See also periphrastic **be going to.**

Verbal deixis (adjective: deictic) is a grammaticalized means of locating events and objects in time and space. See tense.
The case of tense in SingE. The tense system of Singapore Colloquial English (SingE) illustrative of substratum influence (see also The case of aspect in SingE). It shows the strong effect of Chinese, which as a highly analytical language has virtually no inflections. This can be seen in the smaller number of inflections in SingE. The 3rd person present tense verb ending {-s} is subject to variable use, but often not used, e.g. *He play soccer also very good one leh.* Tense is marked chiefly by temporal adverbials: the present by *today*, *now*, the past usually by *yesterday*, e.g. *Yesterday, dey go there oriddy.* and the future by *tomorrow*, e.g. *Boss, tomorrow can get my paycheck or not?* Winford accounts for this partly as second language acquisition simplification and partly as substrate influence. There is a difference in the frequency of the use of past tense {*ed*}. Punctual verbs are marked more (56.2%) than stative verbs are (36.9%). Non-punctual verbs are marked with {*ed*} least often (14.7%) (see Ho and Platt 1993 for the percentages). The less frequent use of {*ed*} accords with the lack of substrate endings, but the variability in inflectional frequency shows the possible influence of a universal tendency to take punctuality in account which in the absence of any marking that indicates the contrary is interpreted as having past time reference. State and non-punctual verbs such as know are regarded as having present reference, which may help to account for their “resistance” to marking with {*ed*}, cf. *He also know about it mab!* (*Mab* marks the truth of a statement as something obvious; borrowed from Cantonese.)


(Tense)

**Modality**

*Mood*

*Subjunctive*

*Mandative subjunctive*

*Irrealis*

*Modal auxiliaries*

*Double modals*

*Semi-modals*

**The (Modal) Auxiliary in EAP**

(Aspect)

**Modality** is a category of the verb which expresses uncertainty. Example: *may* in *they may be at home.*

Modality is also expressed in other ways, e.g. by adverbials, cf. *possibly they are at home.* See also modal auxiliary. In OE grammatical modality was most prominently expressed by the subjunctive. By the ME period the subjunctive was beginning to weaken as the conjugational paradigms lost their inflectional distinctions more and more. In ModE the subjunctive is still employed, but the circumstances of its use are restricted grammatically, stylistically, and regionally. It has largely been replaced by the emerging system of modal auxiliaries.

The subjunctive and the modal verbs. The system of modal verbs was undergoing changes in the EModE period, which are still in progress in ModE. The motivation for the new meanings and functions lay in the loss of the distinctive endings, in this case, subjunctive inflections. Consequently, the subjunctive continued to be used where distinctive forms survived, viz. as present-tense *be* and past-tense *were* (all persons) and in the 2nd and 3rd persons singular present-tense with no ending, e.g. *Blessed be God* (Text 6.1, Pepys. *Diary* Jan. 1, 1660) or Mr. Worldly Wiseman: *I would advise thee, then, that thou with all speed get thyself rid of thy burden* (Bunyan: *Pilgrim’s Progress* First Stage, 1667-68). At least a part
of the distinction between indicative and subjunctive, namely the expression of the hypothetical, was taken over by the modals. This is, of course, also a part of the general move toward periphrastic (analytic) constructions in English. The older, presumably more or less original meanings of modals were obligation (must, shall), volition (will), and ability, knowledge, power (can) (see deontic and dynamic modality). In fact, even in MOD the two “future” modals may carry strong overtones of these meanings. The question Shall I help you with your homework? is an example of the meaning of obligation and They won’t do as we want is an example of volition.

With the change in paradigm the past tense forms should, would, and could, as indications of tentativeness, were increasingly used where once the subjunctive had expressed possibility or probability (see epistemic modality). At the same time the system of semi-modals such as have to, want to, be going to, and be able to, which have past tenses, infinitive and participle forms, were further elaborated and took over many of the original meanings of the modals (see semi-modals). Must, an originally past-tense form whose present-tense form must was lost in the 16th century, did not participate in this move to tentativeness. May could now be used in wishes instead of the subjunctive as in “A god rewarde you,” quoth this roge; “and in heauen may you finde it” (Harman 39 qtd. in Rissanen 1999: 229), where rewarde is subjunctive, but may you finde it is modal.

The use of the modals shall and will as true auxiliaries to express the future dates in essence from the EModE period. Before this they retained a great deal of the original meanings: for shall this was obligation (and should often still expresses this) and for will it was volition. The shift of shall from modality to future marker may be one of the results of Wycliffe’s use of shall to translate the Latin future tense. With will the predictive meaning seems to have developed more naturally as a kind of outgrowth of the volition “What I want (= volition) is what will be (= prediction.” The former was associated with the written, the latter, with the spoken language (cf. Rissanen 1999: 211).

Mood is a secondary category of the verb, one of whose terms, the subjunctive, is closely related to modality. Traditionally mood in English has included not only the subjunctive, but also the indicative and the imperative. The indicative is the default mood in statements and is characterized by its association with truth values, i.e. a statement is either true or false. The subjunctive is used chiefly to express desired, but not yet achieved actions or states. This makes its domain the unreal (see irrealis). Modal auxiliaries are often used to express the same thing. Neither the subjunctive nor the modals can be said to have truth values. The imperative is the mood of commands. As such, it is concerned with directing people’s actions and is also not assessable in terms of truth value.

Examples: indicative: OE: þis syndon þa domas, þe Æðelbirht cyning æsettæ on Augustinus dæge “These are the laws which King Æðelbirht set up in St. Augustine’s days” (Text 2.1 “Æðelbirht’s Laws” [title], 602 or 603). ME: Ich wene þer ne beþ in al þe world contreyes none / þat ne holdep to her owne speche bote engelond oner “I think there are in all the world no countries / That don’t hold to their own speech but England alone” (Text 4.2: Robert of Gloucester, c. 1300). EModE: The man that met thee is one Worldly Wiseman, and rightly is he so called; partly because he savoreth only the doctrine of this world ... (therefore he always
goes to the town of Morality to church) and partly because he loveth that doctrine best, for it saveth him best from the cross, .... (Bunyan. Pilgrim's Progress, First Stage. 1667/68).

Examples: subjunctive: OE Gif man magð-mane genimed, þān ægende L. scillingas and æft æt þān ægende sinne willan at gebiege. “If someone abducts a virgin/maiden by force, 50 shillings for the person she belongs to, and then he may buy her back as desired” (Text 2.1 “Ædelbirht’s Laws” [Law 82], 602 or 603). ME: And God seide, Li t be maad, and li t was maad. “… may there be light, …” (Text 5.2: Wycliffe, Genesis 1:3, 1385). EModE: Mr. Worldly Wiseman: I would advise thee, then, that thou with all speed get thyself rid of thy burden “… should get rid of…” (Bunyan. Pilgrim's Progress. First Stage, 1667-68).

ModE: My only concern is that you not be hurt like Norma was. I want to see you happy and settled. (J. Franzen. The Corrections. N.Y.; Picador: 2001, p. 544).


Subjunctive was realized as a parallel paradigm to the indicative in OE. OE example: Godes feoh and ciricean XII gyld “(may) it be recompensed to God’s property and the church 12-fold”; the indicative was gylt. See also irrealis, mandative subjunctive, mood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person + number</th>
<th>present (strong verbs)</th>
<th>present (weak verbs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st, 2nd, 3rd person sg.</td>
<td>ic, þū, hē, hēo, hit drīfe</td>
<td>ic lufie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st, 2nd, 3rd plur.</td>
<td>wē / gē / hī drīfen</td>
<td>wē / gē / hī lufien</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: The present subjunctive paradigm (see also principal parts and concord in the verb).

The subjunctive was used, among other things, to express wish or volition, the possible, but not certain truth of a situation, or hypothetical contexts. Only vestiges of the subjunctive are to found in ModE. An example of volition (this and the following from Matthew 6:9) is the phrase sī þīn nama gehālgod from the Lord’s Prayer, where sī is the present subjunctive of be. In the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible it is still rendered in the subjunctive Hallowed be thy name, but in a ModE translation we find instead the modal auxiliary verb may: May your holy name be honored (Good News for Modern Man. 3rd ed. n.p.: American Bible Society: 1971).

Mandative subjunctive is one of the few vestiges of the subjunctive in ModE. It occurs in subordinate clauses after predicates like order, demand, suggest, recommend, be important, be decisive, be mandatory, and the like. The verb remains uninflected and need not take do-periphrasis if negated. Example: We demanded be not come late again. Many speakers prefer a modal expression. Example: We demanded that he should not come late again.

The mandative subjunctive is more normal even in spoken standard AmE than in BrE. However, there has been a general increase is the use of the subjunctive, as the results in the following table show. The leader is AmE; but BrE seems to be undergoing a remarkable shift. The results from NZE and AusE are remarkably high but do not tell us anything about change over time.
Table: Mandative subjunctive (vs. should) is strongest in AmE, then NZE/AusE, then BrE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Brown</th>
<th>LOB</th>
<th>WCNZE</th>
<th>Frown</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>ibid.: 570</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All major varieties of English may well be undergoing change, and in the process there is no clear bellwether variety. It is also hardly possible to do more than speculate about the sources of change. Was the mandative subjunctive present throughout the history of Southern Hemisphere English or is its high rate of use the result of AmE influence? Or is there some other reason? A “resurrection” of the subjunctive would involve the spread of distinctive forms, which may, therefore, be seen as moving against the general typological current of the leveling of distinctions.

Irrealis aka contra- (or counter-)factual or condition-contrary-to-fact are all terms for unreal conditions, often expressed by use of modals, sometimes by the subjunctive, esp. as seen in unreal conditional sentences. Examples: If I had known (subjunctive), I would have told you (modal).

Modal auxiliaries are a sub-category of the auxiliary verbs which represents grammaticalized modality. The main verbs in this class are can, may, must, shall, and will. Although four of the five the modal verbs listed have “new” past tenses (could, might, should, and would; but not must), they do not have non-finite forms, i.e. there is no infinitive, no present, and no past participle. The traditional modals are also characterized by the absence of to before the following infinitive. The semantic criteria for modality are extremely varied but center on the opinion or attitude of the speaker (cf. Lyons 1977: 452; Palmer 1986: 2) or a speaker’s judgment of the likelihood of a proposition being true (Quirk et al. 1985: 219). Three types are frequently recognized: (1) Deontic for permission and obligation. Example: you may/must stay overnight. (2) Dynamic for ability and volition. Example: She couldn’t/wouldn’t speak French. (3) Epistemic for possibility and probability. Example: They may/must be at home. A fourth type may be emerging: (4) Evidential for hearsay and factual. Example: Language history can be interesting (factual). (See also semi-modals for more on the four types.) Hearsay is not associated with a full modal, but can be expressed by a semi-modal. Example: Language history is supposed to be / is said to be interesting. See also double modals.

The development of the modal verb is, from a formal point of view, intimately connected not only with the older Germanic emergence of preterite-present verbs, none of which have the 3rd person singular present tense inflection since the present tense forms were originally past tense (or preterite) forms and thus had no such ending. This lies behind the class of traditional modal auxiliaries may, must, can, will, shall, which do not a 3rd person singular {-s}. (Further modals are also recognized, most commonly ought (to), need, dare, and need to.) More recently the NICE features, which are concerned chiefly with the lack of the use of periphrastic do, have come to apply to all the auxiliaries, that is, the primary auxiliaries, be, have, and do and the modal auxiliaries, but not to lexical verbs:

- N - direct Negation (should > shouldn’t)
- I - Inversion in questions (I will > Will I)
- C - Code or reduced forms (I may go > so may you, i.e. without repeating the main verb go)
- E - Emphatic affirmation (Must we run? Yes, we must) (cf. Coates 1983: 4)
Double modals refers to the use of two modal auxiliaries one immediately after the other. This is regarded as non-standard usage and does not occur in StE. Non-standard GenE and the traditional dialects of English have such combinations. However, not all such combinations are permissible. Double modals are possible in Tyneside and Northumberland, but, for example, only with can/could as the second verb: might could, mustn’t could; wouldn’t could’ve; would could (Beal 2004: 128). In Scots the double modal is also, cf. will can; might could; might can, would could. Modals may even occur after to, e.g. I’d like to could do that. (Miller 2004: 52ff).


Semi-modals (the term semi-modal is from Palmer 1988; Coates (1983) uses quasi-modal, and Joos (1968), quasi-auxiliary) are emerging auxiliary forms which express modality but do not have the NICE features of auxiliaries (see also modal auxiliaries). All the same, they show signs of undergoing what may be seen as a new wave of grammaticalization. These verbs not only carry meaning much like the traditional modals, but also fill some of the semantic gaps in the modal system, such as that caused by the bleaching out of usages such as the volitional meaning of will. Examples: gotta, gonna, hafta, wanna.

The major argument for the existence of this new class is to-amalgamation. Several of the semi-modals are characterized by frequent amalgamation of the marker to with the preceding element in the semi-modal. This is coupled with considerable phonological restructuring with vowel reduction to schwa and consonant shortening as in oughta and (have) gotta pronounced with a single, rather than a double (i.e. long) /T/. The latter is especially noticeable in AmE, because a true geminate or long [t] (not a spelling one) cannot be flapped whereas a single or short [t] will be flapped if followed by an unstressed syllable. In other words, gotta is flapped [gøtə] while got to (town) is unflapped [gɔtə]. Such assimilation also occurs in hafta, basta, usta, and supposta in which the original final voiced element of the verb has been devoiced to match the /t/ of the following word to. In the case of wanna post-nasal /t/ has been lost as is typical in the environment of a nasal plus an unstressed syllable in AmE: (cf. winter [wintə]).

Support for the assumption of this as grammaticalization also comes from the role they play in the types of modality which are grammaticalized in English. Three types of readily recognized: deontic, epistemic, and dynamic. A fourth, evidential, seems to be emerging. Each has a strong and a weak pole.

- **Deontic modality**: obligation (strong) and permission (weak). The status of the semi-modals gains support from the fact that the expression of the past is usually made using a periphrastic form (be obliged, be allowed) or an amalgamated form (hafta, basta, gotta), e.g. you may use my car: you were allowed to use...; they must pay the bill: they had to (hadda) pay the bill.

- **Epistemic modality**: logical necessity (strong) and logical possibility (weak). Here the expression of the past is by means of perfect infinitives, e.g. this must be correct: this must have been correct, it may sound strange: it may have sounded strange. The amalgamated forms crop up as options, cf. you gotta be kidding.
Dynamic modality: volition (strong) and ability (weak). The expression of the past is with the morphological past: he can’t translate this: he couldn’t translate this; she won’t help him: she wouldn’t help him; they’re gonna go soon: they were gonna go soon.

Evidential modality (emerging): factual (strong) and hearsay or quotative (weak) modality. The expression of the past is made with the perfect infinitive, with the morphological past of the modal expression, or with both simultaneously: he’s supposta be nice: he was supposta be nice / he is supposta have been nice / he was supposta have been nice.

A particularly prominent example is the emergence of the semi-modal be going to / gonna in the EModE as a further means of expressing the future. The earliest generally recognized example is Therfore while thys unhappy sowle by the vytorys pomeys of her enmyes was goyng to be broughte into helle for the sylence and onleful lustys of her body from 1482 (The Revelation to the Monk of Evesham: 43). Since the main verb brought expresses movement, the idea of movement is less prominent in goyng. Instead the notion of purpose, and therefore futurity, is promoted (Danchev and Kytö 1998: 148). This is a natural step in the process of grammaticalization: a central meaning (here: movement) becomes less prominent and an associated meaning (here: intention, futurity) become salient. Although this example is very early and may not be a true case of grammaticalized be going to, the construction seems to have become part of the grammar by mid-17th century (ibid.: 158). As intuitive as the process of meaning transfer by association (see also abduction) is, the question still remains as to why grammaticalization of be going to took place at this point in the history of English and not earlier or later. One plausible but unproven explanation might be the existence of a similar future construction in French (venir de faire quelque chose) which would have been calqued (translated word for word) onto English. Not only was French widely known and spoken, it was also widely translated into English in the Late ME and EModE periods. This could have supplied the necessary impetus for its adoption and further development in English (ibid.: 157). By the 2nd half of the 17th century go and come were being used in this construction (e.g. going to go/ come), which is an indication that the original meaning of go had bleached out and been generalized to the new meaning of intension and futurity (see also periphrastic be going to for more on the grammaticalization of this semi-modal).


The Modal Auxiliary in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The overall frequency of modal auxiliaries in ModE is similar in all registers, viz. 10-15 % of all verbs (Biber et al: 456), but the modals differ among themselves in frequency of occurrence. The following table shows that will, for example, is eighteen times more frequent than shall. This is an enormous change in comparison with the EModE period, when the two modals developed into true auxiliaries of the future and were both widely used (see modality).
Table: The frequencies of the modal verbs in EAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>will</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>could</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>might</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shall</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation has more modals than EAP by about 3:2; EAP has only 40% the frequency of could and two-thirds that of can, but fourteen times as many instances of may – all three in the sense of possibility. “In academic prose, three of the permission/possibility modals (could, may, and might) are used almost exclusively to mark logical possibility” (ibid.: 491), while permission is seldom expressed in EAP. The semi-modals (be going to, be supposed to, (bad) better, have (got) to, need to, ought to, and used to are rare in EAP. While will occurs 40% as often in EAP and would one-third as often, be going to hardly occurs at all (Biber et al. 1999: 489).


Aspect (cf. mode of action, lexical aspect) is a feature of the verb (or predicate) which marks “situation-internal time,” which stands in contrast to tense (Comrie 1976: 5). Aspect in English may be habitual, hot-news, perfective, progressive, punctual, or stative. In OE aspect was more likely to be marked lexically. What this means is that different facets or aspects of meaning could be expressed by using prefixes. One of the most prominent of these is {ge-}, which emphasized the completed or perfective nature of the action designated by a verb. In Text 2.5 we find wunian in l. 5 in the simple meaning of “dwell, live,” but gewunian in l. 6, where it is the suitable way of emphasizing the idea of togetherness or completeness. In l. 8 we find first ferdon “go,” but immediately afterwards geferdon “enter.” Other examples are brecan “break” – abrecan “smash”; shean “hit” – ofshean “kill”; or bernan “burn” – forbernan “burn up” (cf. Samuels 1973: 163ff). These prefixes were, however, generally in decline and were gradually replaced by new developments in the language in the ME and EModE periods. Grammatical aspect slowly emerged. Example: besettan “own, keep, occupy” vs. settan “set, cause to sit,” but ModE simple they set it down vs. progressive they were setting it down and perfect they have set it down.

Samuels, M.L. (1972) Linguistic Evolution with Special Reference to English. Cambridge: CUP.

Punctual aspect marks a verb as designating a singular, complete act. In English this is the case with dynamic verbs and the simple, unmarked form of the verb is used for this. Example: The phone rang. As
it turns out, the simple form is also employed for habitual, iterative (repeated), or characteristic acts. Example: The phone rang. The distinction between punctual and habitual-iterative-characteristic is often only clear from the context or the use of the appropriate adverbials. Example: The phone rang just after eight (punctual) vs. The phone rang for five minutes (iterative).

**Stative aspect** is a use of verbs to designate a state. Examples: cognitive verbs like know or understand, verbs of perception like see and hear are typically used for states and cannot occur in the progressive form. Examples: We know (never: *are knowing) what happened. They saw (not: *were seeing) damage. Some verbs, such as ones of position, vary according to the nature of their subject. Example: She’s lying on the sofa, but not *London’s lying on the Thames.

**A-prefixing** is a now archaic form of the progressive. The source of the prefix is the unstressed form of the preposition on + the –ing form of the verb. Example: they were a-singing “they were engaged in singing.” In OE beon + present participle was ambiguous and could be a main verb followed by a participial adjective or was perhaps already a progressive. In ME this sequence can be regarded as a structural unit because the beon is seldom separated from the main verb by other elements. The loss of such prefixes as {a-, be-, ge-} may have given impetus to the progressive as a way of expressing on-going activity or durative aspect (Strang 1972: 190f; Samuels 1973: 161ff). Two separate OE constructions have been suggested as the sources: be was bunteande and be was on bunteunge. Inasmuch as both came to use the same ending, i.e. bunte ende) and the preposition of the latter was reduced from on/an/in to a and eventually to zero, the two coalesced. Yet in the north –ing and –ande remained distinct much longer even though the progressive was stronger there. In Scotland the two were kept separate because participle and gerund did not coalesce.


**Progressive aspect** is one of the major grammaticalized types of **aspect** in StE. It is formed with the auxiliary be + present participle and is aspectually distinct from the simple form. Example: I am eating lunch vs. I eat lunch at one every day. In early ME the frequency of the progressive was low. The Polychronicon has 5/100,000 words, which is fewer even than Orosius (OE) at a rate of 518/100,000. In the ME period “... the use of the progressive is much higher in northern texts than in midland or southern texts” (Fischer 1992: 251). Nevertheless, Havelok (c. 1300), a northern text, has no examples of the progressive. (The nearest thing to a progressive is the following: Hwo hors ne havede, com gangande “Who did not have a horse, came walking” (Havelok, l. 2287).) The use of the progressive with the perfect and after modals came in the 14th century; the future and the passive progressives did not emerge until much later, yet by the end of the ME period there was a clear increase and the progressive sky-rocketed at the beginning of the ModE period (Strang 1972: 207f).

Text 5.4 quoted from John Paston II, an upper-class businessman, writing to his brother in 1475 contains a clear case of the progressive: The Kyngys Imbassatorys, Sir Thomas Mongomere and the Master off the Rollys, be conyng bronwardys from Nuse... l. 14). This may be attributed to the colloquial style in which it the letter was written. Text 5.6 from the Canterbury Tales contains a further possible example, but its
somewhat unusual word order – *Singeing he was, or fletinge, al the day* (l. 91) – by topicalizing the participles has a more adjectival than verbal effect.

The progressive was used much more frequently in EModE than it had been previously, but by no means as widely as in present-day English. Where Bunyan (1667-68) writes *why standest thou still?* ModE usage would have *why are you standing still?*

From the point of view of standard grammar, little has happened since 1700 (cf. 8.2.1). Chief of among the developments is the completion of the TMA (tense-modality-aspect) paradigm, such as the extension of the progressive to the passive. Where earlier forms such as *the house was building* were once common, today they are rare and are considered non-standard for *the house is being built*. Overall the progressive form occurs more frequently in ModE than it did in EModE, and is apparently still extending its scope.

In Irish English, as with further varieties of Celtic-influenced English in Scotland, the Hebrides, and Wales, the progressive is used more widely than in StE. Other non-standard Englishes (in the North of England and in some nativized ESL varieties) also extend the progressive, for example to verbs of emotion. Example: *And everybody was wanting to see* (Siemund 2004: 405) or of state as in *they were belonging the river is flowing into the Atlantic* (cf. Filppula 2004: 77f). IrE occurrences such as *she is at the milking of the cow* (Siemund 2004: 405) probably go back to older forms of the English progressive (Winford 2009).

It has been observed that the progressive is used more widely in Southern Hemisphere ENL communities than in AmE and BrE. This includes the increasing use of the expanded form with stative predicates, especially, for example, of *will + be + Ving* in NZE, but the differences are statistical and not categorical, as the following table shows the overall frequencies in six corpora (NZE in the Wellington Corpus (WCNZE, 1980s); AusE in the Austrian Corpus of English (ACE, 1980s); BrE in the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus (LOB, 1961) and thirty years (1991) later in the Freiburg-LOB corpus (FLOB); AmE in the Brown Corpus (1961) and thirty years later (1992) in the Freiburg-Brown Corpus (Frown).

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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>606</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>802</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLOB (1991)</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>ACE (1980s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>716</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>789</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table:** Frequencies of progressive aspect in corpora of one million words (Hundt et al. 2004: 569)

What these results indicate is that there has been an increase in the use of the progressive in BrE and AmE over a period of thirty years (columns 1 and 2) and, furthermore, that the higher use of the progressive in AusE and NZE is indicative of the “leading role” of these varieties in this expansion.


Perfect ive aspect includes both perfect and perfective. The perfect is, next to the progressive, one of the major two grammaticalized types of aspect in standard ModE. It is formed with the auxiliary have + past participle and is aspectually distinct from the simple past. Example: I haven’t seen her (up to now) vs. I didn’t see her (in the past).

In OE, in AAVE, and in some creoles perfective aspect refers to a completed action. Example: OE {ge-} as in geferdon “enter,” which is used for a more “complete” action than ferdon “go” (Text 2.5, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 9th century). This and other prefixes are lexical, and perfective aspect is, consequently, lexical in nature in OE. In AAVE done = completive / perfective, i.e. an eventuality is over (+ resultant state); such aspectual usage is incompatible with states and is also not possible with past adverbs such as yesterday (Green 1998: 47ff). Example: I done promise Miss Sally (Text 10.6, Harris. “Why the Alligator’s Back Is Rough,” 19th century) indicates an already completed action. In Tok Pisin pain is a transitive verb which regularly takes the final syllable {im}, which marks transitivity, giving it the meaning “search.” When, however, the action of searching is successful (that is, finding), this is marked by having painim followed by “finish,” a “completive aspectual marker,” which in TP is, phonetically, pinis (/f/ > /p/; /ơ/ > /s/). Thus we find here the following pairs:

- painim / painim pinis search / find
- boilim / boilim pinis boil / sterilize
- promis / promis pinis promise / keep a promise (Mühlhäusler 1986: 171)

The perfect form in OE (as opposed to the lexical perfective) was formed with habban/ hauen, which in OE was already a perfect auxiliary. However, it was not the only auxiliary of the perfect; ben was also used, but the former was ousting the latter. In Havelok we find both, e.g. Quanne he havede this pleinte maked “when he had made this complaint” (134); Quanne he weren alle set “when they were [= were] had all sat” (l. 162; note that although this is a northern text, where they might be expected, he is used for both “he” and “they”). The original distinction between change-of-state and (some) intransitives with ben and stative with hauen was not maintained strictly. The loss of ben is sometimes explained by the high functional load of bēo (passive, progressive, perfect) (Fischer 1992: 260f).

In ME the placement of the past participle at the end was still common and continued until the 16th century. Today speakers still distinguish between I have done it and I have it done. According to Mustanoja the perfect as a “compound tense form is longer and therefore more emphatic than the simple preterite … A more emphatic verb form is desirable for indicating the completion of an action which continues up to the moment of speaking than for expressing an action which clearly belongs to the
past” (1960: 504). While speculative, this is not uninteresting. Fischer supports this with the observation that the perfect is more frequent in instructional and colloquial texts (as compared to narrative ones) and occurs mostly in the 1st and 2nd persons. But why this happens precisely in ME is not clear though this might be a part of the general change in Germanic languages from morphological tense/mood/aspect verbal marking to a system with grammaticalized auxiliaries (Fischer 1992: 256ff).

Example of the perfect in ME: *Bote the Flemmynges, that [live] in the west side of Wales, habbeth y-left here strange speche and speketh Saxonlych y-now* (Text 5.1, John of Trevesa’s *Polychronicum*, 1387). The usage seen here is fully congruent with ModE usage: a past happening (“have given up their strange speech”) with current consequences (“they speak Saxon-like now”). Yet Miller reports that the past and the perfect are both possible for recently completed events in Scottish English (Miller 2004: 54ff).

In EModE the **perfect** was still commonly formed with either *have* or *be*, the latter with intransitive verbs, esp. ones of movement, and verbs of change of state. Usage was, however, no longer fully consistent as the following shows. Examples: 1 August. *At the office all the afternoon, till evening to my chamber; where, God forgive me, I was sorry to hear that Sir W. Pens maid Betty was gone away yesterday*, for I was in hopes to have had a bout with her before she had gone, she being very pretty (Text 6.1. Pepys. *Diary*, August 1, 1661). The shift to *have* may have helped distinguish between perfects and passives, cf. ambiguous *was grown*:

Example: *Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried so far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a dropsy, persuad[ed] her she was reported to be in labour* (Text 6.7. Congreve. *The Way of the World*, 1700). The context, esp. the human subject makes it clear that this is a perfect and not a passive, but the likelihood of confusion between the two structures cannot be overlooked.

Perfect aspect in present-day non-standard IrE is more finely differentiated than in StE – frequently, but not always as the result of substratum influence. “It may be the case that, as Bliss (1984: 143) has claimed, ‘Southern Hiberno English has precisely the same range of tenses [and aspects] as Irish has, but the forms are built up of English material’ ...” (Winford 2009: 214). The following types of perfect aspect can be distinguished:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>interpretation</th>
<th>Status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>indefinite anterior perfect</td>
<td><em>I never went till it [car race] yet.</em></td>
<td>experiential perfect but used with the past tense form</td>
<td>standard colloquial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after perfect, aka hot-news perfect</td>
<td><em>You’re after ruinin’ me.</em></td>
<td>relatively recent past; modeled on Irish, but word order as in English</td>
<td>stereotypically IrE; avoided in educated speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medial-object perfect</td>
<td><em>I have it forgot.</em></td>
<td>focus on result; typically dynamic verbs; English and Irish models</td>
<td>recessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be-perfect</td>
<td><em>they are gone idle over it.</em></td>
<td>intransitive counterpart of preceding used with change of state (<em>die</em> or motion <em>come, go, leave</em>); Irish + English models</td>
<td>recessive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hot-news perfect is a type of verbal aspect typical of IrE. It is formed with after + verb + ing to indicate a recently completed act, and it is regarded as a good example of the substrate influence of Gaelic on English. Example: You’re after ruinin’ me.

Habitual aspect, aka iterative marks a verbal act as one which is repeated. Examples: SteE marks the habitual past using used to or would (be used to) would do such things as that). SingE uses use to to mark present habitual (I use to work on Saturdays “do so regularly”); Southwest English traditional dialect marks habitual with the auxiliary do (/ðat do kip ’it daun/ “that keeps (h)e [a cart] down, i.e. something always keeps the cart down”; Wagner 2004: 482f).

In present-day non-standard IrE habitual aspect is expressed in two relatively distinct ways. The first is habitual do as in Two lorries of them now in the year we do burn (Siemund 2004: 405) or the following longer 19th century quotation, which contrasts the habitual with the emphatic use of periphrastic do:

But Dear Joseph when you do write [emphatic] you mite say some thing to William as some like to be mentioned by Name for he is very Kind to Mary Ann. But your Bother in Law does think [habitual] that as you have no Brothers or Sisters in Ireland but Mary Ann an’ him. (Fritz 2006: 295)

This do-form seems to have developed from 17th century southwest English periphrastic do, which was reanalyzed as habitual and reinforced by the existence of a distinct habitual category in Irish (Winford 2009). The second is habitual be, as in I am Surprised that Michael does not be enquiring after me, … (Fritz 2006: 295)
The case of aspect in SingE. The aspect system of Singapore Colloquial English (SingE) is illustrative of substratum influence (see also The case of tense in SingE). It shows the strong effect of Chinese, which as a highly analytical language has virtually no inflections, but is influenced by both Chinese and English, though more by the former. This shows up in the fact while GenE has progressive and perfect aspect, SingE has at least four distinctly marked types of grammaticalized aspect: (1) **progressive**, (2) **completive perfect**, (3) **experiential perfect**, and (4) **habitual**. The progressive in SingE is like GenE except that the auxiliary is optional: *(be) V-in*. The completive perfect is similar in meaning to the resultative perfect in traditional StE (*He has lost his orientation*), but is formed using *already* (*Yesterday, dey go there oreddy*), which parallels the Chinese perfect marker *le*. This is effectively incomplete aspect when used with non-statives: *I wash my hand already*, but inchoative with statives: *The wall white already*, and inceptive with habituals *it rain already* (examples from Boa 2005: 239, 241 qtd. in Winford 2009: 222). The experiential perfect is formed using *already* like Chinese *guo*: *I ever try this type of fruit before*. In regard to completive and experiential Bao states “… *already* and *ever* are English words which have been grammaticalized to express the perfective aspects derived from Chinese” (Bao 2005: 244f in: ibid.). Habitual aspect, finally, is marked by *uso* + verb. Unlike GenE, *uso* is employed for the present rather than the past habitual, cf.
SingE speaker: The tans [military unit] use to stay in Serangoon.

Non-SingE speaker: Where are the staying how?

SingE speaker: I’ve just told you. In Serangoon. (Tongue 1974: 44)

This is motivated by the lack of a past habitual in Chinese, where the habitual is associated with the present. The auxiliary will also expresses present and would past habitual in SingE, as they are in GenE as well; this use may be reinforced by Chinese lui or Malay akan (Deterding, Ling, Brown 2003: 35, qtd. in Winford 2009: 221).


(Inflection)
(Periphrastic structures)
(TMA)
Voice
The Passive in EAP
(Negation)

**Voice** is basically either active or passive and was so even in OE. In contrast to ModE the passive was formed in OE with either the auxiliary bēon “be,” which had a more state-like aspect, or weorpan “become,” which emphasized the result of a dynamic action. Examples: *hæm cafera wæs after cenned* “To him an heir was afterward born” (Text 2.3. Beowulf, 11th century or earlier); & *hær weard se cyning bæseg ofslægen* “And then the king Bagsac was got killed” (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Abbington II) or the year 871). Furthermore, expressions with man “(some)one” were used with the active verb to express a passive-like relation. Example: *7 his broðor Horsan man ofslōh*. “And (some)one slew his brother Horsa = Horsa’s brother was slain” (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 455).

OE could form a passive only from an accusative object. This changed in ME to include passives with subjects corresponding to dative or prepositional objects in active sentences. One factor in this expansion was the gradual decrease in the use of the indefinite man (“one”) construction. Loss of the inflectional endings of nouns was crucial because it made the various object types formally identical. Now the objects of *helpan* (originally with a dative object) and *ascian* (accusative) were identical. And from 1300 on *helpan* and other originally dative verbs are recorded in passive constructions with nominative subjects.

The auxiliary be gradually displaced weorpan completely, possibly reinforced by the influence of French être “be” + past participle. The use of the progressive with the perfect and after modals came in the 14th century; the future and the passive progressives did not emerge until much later, yet by the end of the ME period there is a clear increase and the progressive sky-rocketed at the beginning of the ModE period (Strang 1972: 207f).

In the EModE period the passive could be formed with *have* (and *get*). Example: *If they had any parte of their liberties withdrawne* (OED: have 18 (1568) q.v.). This was helpful in making an indirect object (they) the
subject of the passive construction. The **perfect** was still commonly formed with either *have* or *be*, the latter with intransitive verbs, esp. ones of movement, and verbs of change of state (see examples in Text 6.1). The shift to *have* may have helped distinguish between perfects and passives, cf. ambiguous *it was grown*.

Since 1700 the extension of the progressive to the passive helped to complete the TMA (tense-modality-aspect) paradigm. Where earlier such forms as *the house was building* were common, today they are rare and are considered non-standard for *the house is being built*.

The SingE passive offer a particularly clear example of substratum influence. To form the passive, *kena*, a verb particle specific to SingE and derived from the Malay word for “come into physical contact” is employed. It is used in negative or adversative contexts; and it is followed by a lexical verb in the infinitive or the past participle form, e.g. *John kena scold (by his boss)* “John was scolded ...” or *The thief kena caught (by the police)* “...was caught by ... .” A second way of forming the passive in colloquial SingE is to use *give* as in *John give his boss scold* (“John was scolded by his boss”). The two differ both formally and in their meaning. Unlike *kena*, give may be followed only by the infinitive. Passives with *give* have an implication that the person affected carries part of the blame for what happened to them (Wee 2004: 1064f).


**The Passive in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)** is much more frequent than in everyday conversational English. The passive, which is relatively uncommon in colloquial English at a rate of about one occurrence in a thousand words is ten times more frequent in EAP, namely one occurrence per hundred words. The frequency of passives can run to as high as 25-45% of the total number of finite verb forms. Literary texts, in contrast, have between two and three percent passives. The reason usually given as to why the passive is used so frequently is that it puts the emphasis on the work reported rather than on the author. And, indeed, half of the passives are used to report unspecified non-human causes. Corpus studies have long shown this, and it was reemphasized in the results of the work done by Biber et al. 1999, who include the following EAP text (bold used to highlight the instances of the passive):

> In an experimental facility without breeding animals the health status **can be restored** if healthy animals **are issued** into a clean [fumigated] or [disinfected] room, and the [infected] room **is gradually emptied** as experiments **are terminated**. It is essential during the period that the clean and [infected] room are both in use that a strict barrier **is maintained** between them. Once the room **has been emptied** it **can be thoroughly cleaned** and **disinfected** or **fumigated**. **(Biber et al. 1999: 938)**

The structure of the vocabulary of English continues to be significant inasmuch as it is the more learned words with dominate in use in the passive of EAP, as the following list makes clear:

> **.04 per mille:** applied, calculated, compared, derived, discussed, observed, represented

> **.1 per mille:** achieved, associated, defined, expressed, measured, obtained, performed, related  

(Biber et al. 1999: 479)
Table: Verbs used significantly more frequently in the passive in the Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus in academic prose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preponderance of the passive in EAP</th>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; 90% of occurrence in the passive</td>
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<tr>
<td>aligned</td>
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<tr>
<td>based (on)</td>
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<tr>
<td>deemed</td>
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<tr>
<td>effected</td>
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<tr>
<td>positioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>situated</td>
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<tr>
<td>subjected (to)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Biber et al. 1999: 478f)

Table: Verbs used more frequently in the passive than in the active in EAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inflection</th>
<th>Periphraethnic structures</th>
<th>TMA</th>
<th>Voice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple negation</td>
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Negation can be carried out in a number of ways on the sentence level. Usually, it is the verb which is negated, and negation is expressed by adding the word *not* or its contraction *n’t* to the auxiliary.

Example: *He must be at home* and negated *He must not (or: mustn’t) be at home*. If there isn’t any auxiliary, *periphrastic do* in supplied. Example: *She gave me a call* and negated *She did not (or: didn’t) give me a call.*

*Not* is the chief marker of negation. Its OE form *nāht* developed out of *nā* “no” + *wihht* “person, thing,” which was originally used together with pre-verbal *ne* “not” to lend it more emphasis. ME example: *But be ne lefte nat* “But he did not leave [off visiting his parishoners]” (Chaucer. Canterbury Tales, “Prologue” [Parson], late 14th century, l. 492). As time went by, it was *nāht* which came to express negation while the original negator *ne* weakened phonetically and began to drop out of the language.

One consequence of this was that the negative marker *nāht/not* no longer always preceded the verb in ME, as prescribed by the negative-first principle. Example: *His arwas drooped noght* “His arrows [feathers] drooped not” (Canterbury Tales, “Prologue,” [Yeoman], late 14th century, l. 107). The adoption of *do* was a way of ensuring that the negator could continue to come before the lexical verb. For with the introduction of *do, not* followed this new auxiliary, yet still preceded the lexical verb, thus preserving the negative-first principle (cf. Mazzon 1994).

Further words with a negative or with a semi-negative or restrictive sense such as, in the first case, *never,* and in the second, *barely, hardly, infrequently, only, rarely, seldom* and others carry enough semantic weight for the verb (actually, the auxiliary) to retain second position in the sentence, thus insuring that the lexical verb appears in third position. Example: *We are unskild in th[e arts of makeing our follys agreeable, nor can we dress up the D– [Devil] so much to advantage, as to make him pass for an angel of light* (W. Byrd. “Letter to Mrs. Jane Pratt Taylor,” 1735). This continues to be the case today (see also word order).
The negator *never* was originally a contraction of *ne + ever*. In the regional and traditional dialects *never* is more widely used than in StE. Example (Sam Weller): *I never see one o' the articles o' furniter* (Text 8.3, Dickens. Sam Weller, 1837). *Never*, in contrast to *not*, does not demand periphrastic *do* (see preceding example), but may be combined with it. Example: “You know I *didn't never* play it in my life.” (Text 10.3, Lardner. “Three without, Doubled,” non-standard GenE, 1917).

English pidgins and creoles frequently negate the verb by using a pre-verbal negator. Example: Daddy Jack: “*Oona no bin see da' B'er 'Gater?*” “‘You (plural) no have seen Brother Alligator?’” (Text 10.6, Harris. “Why the Alligator’s Back Is Rough,” 1881, l. 17).


**Multiple negation, aka double negation,** is the use of two or more markers to indicate negation. This was common in OE but is non-standard in ModE. Examples: OE *Nis nu cwicra nan* “Nor is now alive no one” (Text 2.4, “Excerpt from ‘The Wanderer,’” perhaps late 6th century). ME: *In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk; nas nat,* “In all this world there wasn’t no one like him” (Canterbury Tales, “Prologue,” [doctor], late 14th century, l. 412) or: *Hir friendshipe nas [< ne + was] nat newe to beginne* “Their friendship wasn’t not new in its beginning” (ibid.: l. 428). This double negative shows that the current StE stricture against multiple negation did not always count. It was only in the EModE period that its occurrence began to decline, at least in the standard language, thus relegating the double negation to the non-standard language. Examples of non-standard ModE (Sam Weller’s father): “*Lord bless their little hearts, they thinks it’s all right, and they … don’t know no better*” (Text 8.3, Dickens. Sam Weller, 1837, l. 24). In the following, early 20th century quotation we see the use of *do*-periphrasis with *never*: “You know I *didn’t never* play it in my life” (Text 10.3, Lardner. “Three without, Doubled,” non-standard GenE, 1917, l. 15). Multiple negation means that more than two negative elements may co-occur since negation can be copied onto any or all indefinite elements. Example: “… and he don’t want to hear nothing bout no new one” (A. Walker. The Color Purple. N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich: 9th letter).

(Grammar and grammars)
(Grammatical categories)
(Primary grammatical categories)
(Secondary grammatical categories)

**Syntax**

**Word order**

**Topicalization**

**Thematic roles**

**Thematic structure, theme-rheme**

**Tag questions**

**Copular verb**

**Copula deletion**

**Pleonastic subject**

**Pied piping and stranding**

**Complementizers**

**Phrasal verb pattern**

**Sentence types in Scientific English**
**Syntax** is a branch of linguistics dealing chiefly with the arrangement of grammatical elements and their **morphological** features in sentences. Example: the syntax of a statement in English usually follows the order SV_{aux}V (she has come), but in a question may invert to V_{aux}SV (Has she come). In the course of the history of English not only morphology, but also **word order** has undergone significant change.

**Word order in English** has chiefly, in the context of this book, to do with the relative sequence of Subject, Verb, and Object in a sentence. In OE it was relatively free with SVO, AdvVSO, and SOV as the main variants, often however, conditioned by clause type. ModE is more rigid using chiefly SVO in most declaratives and (Wh-word)V_{aux}SVO in most questions. See also **periphrastic verb structure**.

Under a number of conditions SV order inverts to VS. Most obviously, this is the case with questions (see **NICE**). Verb-second order, as this is sometimes called, is the case not only in SVO, but also after initial adverbials (AdvVSO), became increasingly infrequent, yielding to AdvSVO. Note that AdvVSO is still a part of in two variants. Variant (1) non-assertive adverb + auxiliary + S+V. Examples: Seldom does she agree with me; Never had I seen such a sight. Variant (2), optional after initial adverbial expression of place or direction/goal and less strongly prescribed than (1) has Adverb of place + V + S. Examples: Into the Valley of Death rode the six hundred (Tennyson: “The Charge of the Light Brigade” 1854) or The inky-pinky spider went up the water spout / Down came the rain and washed the spider out / …; Down the road came the bus; There goes John. Optional inversion of a noun subject and lexical verb also occurs when direct speech is given. If the subject is a pronoun, inversion is restricted to the verb say. Examples: “Never,” replied the captive. Or: “Never,” said he. Inversion of auxiliary and subject is found after initial negatives and semi-negatives (see **negation**).

In OE the difference from ModE is esp. clear in subordinate clauses, in which there was a clear tendency for the verb to appear at the end of the sentence. Example: Gif cyning æt manes hām drincæ, literally “If king at a man’s home drinketh” (Text 2.1, *Æðelberht’s Laws*, 602 or 603, where all the gif-clauses share this word order pattern). Without doubt, the Conquest had a massive affect on vocabulary, changed patterns of word formation, and altered the phonological structure of the language. However, there is less agreement about its effects on word order and inflection even though there is considerable evidence of change between OE and ME – whatever the grounds for is may have been.

**Typological change:** Inflection and word order. There was a shift from synthetic to analytic structure, that is, from a syntactic system which was highly dependent on inflectional endings with less strictly fixed word order to a system with few endings and highly prescribed word order. The new word order, whose default setting was SVO, led to the gradual abandonment of SOV, which was frequent in dependent clauses in OE (see preceding).

The other major difference vis-à-vis ModE is inverted, i.e. Verb-Subject word order after an introductory adverbial. Examples (both from Text 2.5, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: “Introduction” (MS E), 9th century):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverbial</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erest</td>
<td>weron bugend þises landes</td>
<td>Brittes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>were dwelling of this land</td>
<td>the Britons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þa</td>
<td>gelamp</td>
<td>hit þæt Pyhtas coman supan of Scithian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then</td>
<td>happened</td>
<td>it, that the Picts came south from Scythia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inversion of this sort was common, but not absolute.

In ME there was also a move to greater use of periphrastic verb structures, i.e. ones which depended more on auxiliaries than on mood and tense inflections, and on prepositional phrases in place of case endings. While pronoun objects in OE tended to be pre-verbal, nominal objects were post-verbal in main clauses. Note that only 18% of all noun objects preceded the verb in the early ME *Ormulum*, while 51% of pronoun objects still did (cf. Palmatier 1969: 51, where no distinction is made between main and sub-clauses, qtd in Fischer 1992: 372). Example of a pre-verbal noun object, albeit in a subordinate clause: *taat be Dreiding 7 aþe sette* “that he dread and awe impose” (Text 4.5, *Admonition from the Ormulum*, 2nd half of 12th century). The noun-pronoun difference is explained as due to lighter weight and *theme-rheme* structure: noun phrases are “heavier” and heavier elements tend to come later in the sentence. The loss of inflection is frequently given as one of the motivations for fixed word order and the use of prepositions. Certainly, pronouns, with case marking, could follow the older pattern longer, e.g. *Himm dredeþþ* (ibid.).

Note that OE is, in the matter of word order, organized by discourse structure, which means that elements can be moved to the front of the sentence in order to come into focus. In ME, in contrast, word order is much more strictly determined by syntactic factors and no longer allows the freedom of movement of OE (cf. Fischer 1992: 372ff; cf. the preceding paragraph). Text 4.6 (*Havelok the Dane*, 1295-1310) illustrates the continuation of SOV word order in the subordinate clauses, where the lexical verb comes in final position as in *that ich you wile telle* “that I want to tell you.” This is even the case in following the two main clauses which have the verb in final position: *Wo so it wile here...* “Whosoever wants to hear it...” and *The tale is of Havelok imaked* “the tale is made/written about Havelok,” in which the past participle (*imaked*) of the passive comes at the end. On the other hand, the subclause in the final sentence does not use a final verb position: *Whil he was litel, he yede ful naked* “while he was little, he went fully naked”). What this shows is the variability which word order still had and which could be used to put words at the end of a line for the purposes of rhyme.

One of the consequences of fixed word order may well be the use of singular concord with conjoined subjects, e.g. *Whereof supplant and tricherie / Engendered is* (Gower: ii.2840f), with a plural (conjoined) subject, but a singular verb. But, as Fischer points out, concord was “to some extent more loosely structured in Middle English than in Present-Day English,” cf. *panne the Mynstrall begynnen to don here mynstralcye everych in hire Instruments* (Mandev. (Tit) 155.16f), with a singular subject (*Mynstrall*) but a plural verb (*begynnen*) and plural anaphoric pronouns (*here, hire*). Present-day usage often results from the pronuncements of 16th and 17th century grammarians (Fischer 1992: 364).

A further result of more fixed word order was the loss of dative subjects as the ME period proceeded. In the sentence *Him is lever* literally: “to/for him is preferable” a dummy subject is added (cf. ModE *it is preferable to him*) on the model of *pe kinge* (dative) is lever, where *pe kinge* is re-interpreted as nominative. From this we get ModE *The king/He prefers*, even though numerous “dative” predicates remain, e.g. *it pleases me.*
In the later ME period word order changes continued. Especially remarkable was the gradual move from accusative object before verb, as the more typical OE pattern, to accusative object after the verb, which comes to dominate by the end of the ME period. The frequencies given Table 5.2 are taken from Fries 1940:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1000</th>
<th>1200</th>
<th>1300</th>
<th>1400</th>
<th>1500</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>before verb</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>40+%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>1.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after verb</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>60-%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>98.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Change in verb-object word order (Fries 1940, qtd. in Hopper/Traugott 1993: 60)

The impression given in the table should be relativized inasmuch as the percentages “conceal complex word order adjustments involving differences such as those between pronoun and noun, definite and indefinite NP, heavy and light NP, independent and dependent clause, and so forth” (Hopper/Traugott 1993: 60). Verb second “still operates in Middle English. … By the fifteenth century it was mainly triggered when a wh-element or a negative element was the first constituent in the clause” (Fischer 1992: 375).

A typological perspective on the changes which EModE was undergoing necessarily puts stress on the long-term underlying currents which “the language” was subject to. This is a part of the shift from a largely synthetic to an essentially analytic language mentioned in connection with changes in OE and ME in which there was extensive replacement of inflection by more rigid word order. Subject-Verb was the dominant pattern of word order in affirmative declaratives in EModE. Other patterns still occurred, but they were relatively rare, as in Then was Christian glad and lightsome, ... (Bunyan: Pilgrim’s Progress. Third Stage, 1667-68). It seems that an initial adverb, as in this case, was the most likely element to trigger Verb-Subject inversion. In interrogatives without do-periphrasis there was, of course, also Verb-Subject order, cf. ... why standest thou still ? (Bunyan: ibid.).

In four hundred years since the EModE period syntactic change has, with the significant exception of English pidgins and creoles, been rather unspectacular, but by no means absent. While major changes in inflection or in word order have not taken place, the process of grammaticalization has continued.

In Wales the Celtic substrate also shows up in the use of prepositions, where it affects word order. Example: there’s a special name on that. The same is true of the non-use of inversion in indirect question word order. Example: I don’t know what time is it (Penhallurick 2004: 103ff). SingE grammar makes use of similar word order in indirect questions. Example: May I ask where is the stamp counter?

Pidgins and creoles may reveal something about universal grammatical categories in the way they adopt SVO word order.

**Topicalization, topic** refers to a process in which an element which might otherwise come later in a sentence is moved to initial and thus topical position. OE example: Mið strelum giwundad æleþdan bi bina linuwerispe (Text 2.2, “Christ was on the Cross,” 7th century, Northern English) “With arrows wounded laid they him weary-limbed down.” See also thematic structure.

In ME, as pointed out in 5.3.1.3, such fronting as the following may be found: Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day (Text 5.6, Canterbury Tales, “Prologue” [the Squire], late 14th century, l. 91) contains a further
possible example, but its somewhat unusual word order topicalizes the participle giving it a more adjectival than verbal effect.

In EModE fronting continues to play an important role in topicalization. Example: Boys do now cry “Kiss my Parliament!” instead of “Kiss my arse!” so great and general a contempt is the Rump come to among men, good and bad (Text 6.1. Pepys. Diary, Feb. 7, 1660).

In ModE object fronting is still important. Example: Meat I like; fish I can’t stand. This type of fronting is found less often in the written language than in the spoken, where more auditory stress can be laid on the topics, meat and fish. In the written language more formalized structures are employed: cleft-sentences. There are two types: (1) the cleft-sentence, in which the topic is focused on by being introduced by It + be. Example: It’s meat (that) I like. The pseudo-cleft sentence contains a wh-element to mark the theme and then introduces the element which is to be given emphasis at the very end, in the rheme position. Example: What I don’t like is fish.

**Thematic structure, theme-rheme** is the arrangement of information in a sentence or text. What is known or given (= the topic) usually comes first and represents the theme. What is said about it follows and is new (= the comment) and is the rheme. Example: Changes in inflectional system [theme] continued to simplify the paradigms [rheme].

In OE sentence elements could be rearranged with relative ease in order to front what was thematic. As word order grew more fixed, movement became more restricted. Nevertheless, a number of ways remained in which an element could be fronted. The following schematic examples may help to make this clear. Line 1 begins with an OE example (Text 3.1. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The Invasion of the Vikings in 787) and is following by six ModE alternatives, one unmarked and five with focus on the Patient (in the sense of thematic roles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>fronting</th>
<th>Patient is (bim) marked by accusative case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And they killed him</td>
<td>unmarked (SVO)</td>
<td>Patient (bim) is in object position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And him they killed</td>
<td>fronting</td>
<td>Patient (bim) is marked by left dislocation with stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And he was / get killed</td>
<td>be / get passive</td>
<td>Patient (he) is the subject of the passive sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And they had / got him killed</td>
<td>have / get passive</td>
<td>Patient (bim) is the object of have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was him (that / who) they killed</td>
<td>cleft-sentence</td>
<td>Patient (bim) is the focus of copula be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they did to him was kill him</td>
<td>pseudo-cleft sentence</td>
<td>Patient (bim) is the object of the preposition to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Structural alternatives in ModE for rearranging sentence elements to change the focus

**Fronting** and **clefing** are treated under **topicalization, topic**. **Passivization** (see also **passive**) is the structure which is perhaps the most frequently used to change the focus or functional sentence perspective. In English, the topic of a sentence is usually named at the beginning and what is said (predicated) about it, at the end. The passive allows a direct or an indirect object which is the topic to occupy the initial thematic position and thus helps to realize the desired thematic focus of the sentence. A study of the use of the passive in two journal papers on astrophysics confirms the validity of this principle. In addition, however, the same study offers three further explanations of the use or non-use of the passive: (1) Standard procedural choices in astrophysics research are reported in the passive while unique procedures chosen by the authors of the articles are reported in the active (with
The functionality of the passive is also pointed out by Mehrotra in IndE: The active voice is direct and may be used to a subordinate, as in “I request you to look into the case.” This would be impertinent if used toward someone of higher standing. For one’s boss the passive, as more indirect, would be normal: “You are requested to look into the case” (Mehrotra 1982: 166).

Thematic roles are the semantic roles of all the sentence elements associated with the sentence predicate. Typical roles are agent: the voluntary initiator of some action, e.g. We decided to go to the movies; patient: the entity affected by some action, e.g. The window got broken; instrument: the means used to do something, e.g. A crowbar was employed to jimmy open the window; location: the place in which something is situated, e.g. the book is on the table.

Tag questions include grammatical tag questions, in which the auxiliary of the preceding main verb or the use of do if there is no other auxiliary plus a corresponding pronoun subject is repeated. Example: The food’s cold, isn’t it? The family left, didn’t they? In a number of ESL as well as Welsh Vernacular English the universal tag isn’t it? is used. Example: You went there yesterday, isn’t it? There are, of course, invariant tags such as We can, right? They did, okay? You are, huh? in ENL.

A further form of question which helps to structure texts is the echo question, which is a repeat of a question in declarative word order with a wh-word which has not been fronted. Example: You were where? instead of Where were you? Echo questions serve to show surprise or disbelief; however, they may also be used to elicit clarification or confirmation, as when A says, I just had lunch with the Prime Minister, to which B replies, You had lunch with who?

Copular verb is a verb which links the subject with a predicate complement (aka subject complement). Example: she is hungry, where the verb is links hungry with the subject she. While be is clearly the most important copula, there are others. In OE weorþan “become” was of central importance and shared auxiliary status with bēon in forming the passive. A linking verb can be followed by an noun phrase (NP), an adjective phrase (AdjP), or a prepositional phrase (PP). Examples: NP: þer ne beþ in al þe world contreyes none þat… (Text 4.2: Robert of Gloucester, c. 1300) “There are in all the world no countries that…”); AdjP: Bíð stiþ ond heard (Text 3.5: An Old English riddle from the Exeter Book (Riddle 42), 10th century, West Saxon) “It is stiff and hard”; PP: His lede þatt iss unnderr him Himm dredeþþ þess te mare (Text 4.5, “Admonition from the Ormulum,” 12th century East Midlands) “His people that are under him Will fear him all the more.”

In ModE the copulas consist of three major subgroups: (1) equivalence: be, seem, appear; (2) sensation: look, sound, smell, feel, taste; (3) process: become, get, grow, turn. Groups (1) and (2) are associated with usage
questions which indicate the presence of variants. (1) In the case of the copula be most speakers follow the dictates of word order and choose an object or disjunctive form of the pronoun rather than going for the prescriptive subject or nominative case. Example: That’s me [not *?I] in the photo. In the case of seem AmE and BrE usage diverge, as AmE has He seems like a fool, where BrE may have He seems a fool, thus showing the BrE accepts a NP after the copula while AmE takes only a PP. (2) The same thing applies to look, sound, and feel as it does to seem. Example: AmE: He looks like a fool; BrE: He looks a fool.

**Copula deletion:** a rule in which any form of the copular (or linking) verb be or the progressive auxiliary be which can be contracted in StE can be deleted. This is also called the zero-copula. It is prominent particularly in *African-American Vernacular English*, where it stands in contrast to invariant be. Examples: she hungry, we goin’.

**Pied piping and stranding** are structures in which a preposition moves with its object or not when the object is replaced by a relative pronoun. In the first case (named pied piping after the Pied Piper of Hamlin, who punished the unthankful citizens of Hamlin, whose rats he coaxed away from the town with his music, by enticing their children into following him with his enchanting music out of the Hamlin forever) the preposition follows the relative pronoun to the front of the clause. Example: the man to whom we were talking. In the case of stranding, we find a construction in which the preposition appears without its object after it. The preposition is “stranded” at one place in the sentence while its relative pronoun object has moved to the front of its clause. Example: In the man who we were talking to the object of to is relative who. If the relative element is the form that, stranding is obligatory. Example: the man that we were talking to and not *the man to that we were talking.*

In OE stranding occurred though the conditions were slightly different. If the relative element was indeclinable þe, stranding had to be practiced. If the relative was a declinable pronominal forms, pied piping was obligatory (Traugott 1992: 230ff). Examples: Obligatory pied piping with the relative pronoun þec (2nd person sg. acc.): on ærð sunu unminþ leaf, on þec ic wel licade “thou art son my dear one, in whom (thee) I well pleased was (MkGl (Lü) 1.11, qtd. in ibid.: 210). Obligatory stranding with þe: Oðþere sæðe þæt sin stanþu Hælgaland þe be on bude “Ohthere [a name] said that that shire was called Halogaland that he in lived (Or 1 1.19.9, qtd. in ibid.: 171).


**Complementizers** are grammatical elements which introduce clausal complements. Examples: the that of indirect speech in We believe that the boss has left; the for which introduces infinitive constructions like For her to have come (was nice); the wh-words which introduce indirect questions such as Do you know whether she’s still here; and the possessive (as opposed to accusative) personal pronoun before a gerund clause, e.g. She appreciated our asking her to come.

**Phrasal verb (pattern)** is a combination of a verb and, most usually, an adverbial particle. Verbs of this sort have increased by both the number which exist and the frequency of occurrence over time. Examples: drink up, look out. Phrasal verbs did occur in OE, but far less frequently than in ModE. Example: OE: 7 þæs ymbe III niht ridon twegen eorlas up (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Abingdon II) for the year 871) “And then three nights later two earls rode up.” More common in OE texts were, however, verbs

Old Norse language contact led to the adoption of new phrasal verbs like farenn forþ and geferdon forþ “travel, go” (Blake 1996: 126) and may have helped strengthen a tendency toward the decline of many of the older prefixes and their replacement with phrasal verbs (but see Thim 2008). While some prefixes such as {over-} and {under-}, as in overwork and underpay, have remained and are, indeed, productive (Schröder 2008), very many disappeared, esp. the once common {ge-, a-, of-} quoted above.

In ModE phrasal verbs are usually subclassified in two groups: (1) phrasal verbs as such and (2) prepositional verbs. The first differ from the second in being either transitive or intransitive and – in the case of transitive verbs – in allowing the phrasal particle to either precede or follow a noun object. Examples: Intransitive phrasal verb: Hey, look out! The light’s turning red. Transitive phrasal verb with a noun object: Look up the term in a dictionary, or: Look the term up in a dictionary. Transitive phrasal verb with a pronoun object: Look it up! Prepositional verbs must be transitive and the prepositional element must precede the object. Example: Look at clouds (not *Look the cloud at)! (main text: 4.2.1+8)


Sentence types (as mood) in scientific English reveal something about the ModE usage and the effects of register on frequencies. Unfortunately, similar data on the older stages of the language is much more difficult to come by. The major type of sentence is the declarative. Most of the interrogatives which occur are used rhetorically to help structure the text. Example: What is moonlight made of? It is mostly reflected sunlight of course, but is there something more? The answer is yes: the moon gives off some light of its own (Huddleston 1971: 43: 38001). Imperatives are less frequent, but do, of course, occur as in rhetorical function and in directions and instructions, including ones introduced by let. Examples:

Rhetorical: Pull the skin and it will snap back. Cut out a piece and the detached piece will contract, whereas the skin around the wound will widen the cut by elastically pulling away from it (ibid.: 59: 35201) Instructions: Discuss theoretically the vibrational spectrum of a linear molecule A-B-A (ibid.: 26437). Let-imperative: Let u, v, w be the velocity components along the s, y, z axes of a molecule moving with velocity q, so that \( u^2 + v^2 + w^2 = q^2 \) (ibid.: 28341). Exclamatory sentences are, as expected, rarely found in scientific writing. (Main text: 6.1.2, 6.2.4, 6.32, 6.4, 13.3.2.1+2)