Grammatically Fit 1

A Logical Approach to Integrate English Grammar

Marthe Blanchet
The Grammatically Fit series is all about understanding, practicing and using English grammar.

First, the students are slowly helped to understand each of the 12 grammar rules proposed in each of the 5 booklets of the series by examining selected examples and answering various questions about them. The purpose of this introductory exercise based on active observation is to make the students more aware of WHY, HOW and WHEN each grammar rule is used.

Next, the various grammatical exercises which follow are meant to aid the students in practicing what they were previously made to observe and understand. Nothing prevents the teacher from adding on extra grammatical work to further increase his or her students’ comprehension and grammatical skills.

Finally, using the grammar rules in various written and/or oral activities then provides the students with the opportunity to directly apply, and thus further grasp and better assimilate the rule they have observed, understood and practiced.

The Grammatically Fit series also provides added tools to help the learner attain maximum English proficiency. Besides its grammatical content based on understanding, practicing and using various rules, the Down to Basics and Putting It Together sections are meant as added aids to instill a better comprehension of grammar and to facilitate its everyday use. The former helps to secure a solid grammar base before moving on to new material. The latter gives periodical evaluation pit stops meant to help determine the overall degree of grammatical mastery attained.

Grammatically Fit can be used alone or as an accompaniment to the chosen classroom English learning method. At any moment seen fit by the teacher, a regular class activity can be momentarily put on hold to introduce a particular grammar rule in order to help the students develop and secure better communication skills. The teacher might then decide to simply look at the explanation of the rule with the students and only do one or two exercises judged to be the most appropriate. Nothing prevents the teacher from redoing the exercise(s) or from doing the activities at a later date as a review or to reinforce comprehension of the grammar rule already seen in class. Grammatically Fit is thus to be used as needed in the classroom and as the teacher sees best to help students better understand the English language and use it more efficiently.

The author
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RULE</th>
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TO BE – SIMPLE PAST TENSE
UNDERSTANDING THE GRAMMAR RULE

Take a look at the verb TO BE used in the past tense:

1) I was nervous last night.
2) You were my best friend in kindergarten.
3) She (He) was happy about the upcoming trip.
4) It was a hard exam.
5) We were angry about the results.
6) They were late yesterday.

1. Fill in the following chart after examining the sentences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject (pronoun)</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I</td>
<td>was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3)</td>
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<td>5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What verb is underlined in sentences 1 to 6? __________________________________________

3. In what tense is it? ________________________________________________________________

4. What two forms of the verb have you discovered? __________________________  __________________________
5. What pronouns are used with each form?

______________ is used with the pronouns: ______________

______________

______________

______________

______________ is used with the pronouns: ______________

______________

______________

______________

NOTE: There is no contracted form of the verb *to be* with subject pronouns in the simple past tense.
1. Put the correct form of TO BE simple past tense in the following sentences.

   a) I _____________ in the same class as Jill last year.
   b) You _____________ busy all week.
   c) The children's mother _____________ the one who organized the picnic.
   d) The exercises in the last lesson _____________ quite easy.
   e) She and I _____________ the last to arrive.
   f) They _____________ very satisfied with the results.
   g) It _____________ such a wonderful weekend!
   h) We _____________ extremely pleased to have you over.
   i) John and Kim _____________ sick all last week.
   j) There _____________ an essay question in our history exam.
   k) The wind last night _____________ very strong.
   l) Both broken windows _____________ promptly replaced.
   m) I _____________ late for class twice last month.
n) Planning John's surprise party ______________ a lot of work.

o) The seats next to the window ______________ more comfortable.

p) There ______________ a lot of noise during the demolition of the office building.

q) The weather ______________ simply delightful during our cruise.

r) The Jackson twins ______________ the first to get a perfect score in their test.

s) Alice’s parents ______________ very happy with her school report card.

t) There ______________ two new students in my English class this morning.

2. Read the text and fill in the blanks with TO BE in the simple past tense.

Yesterday, I ______________ at the park. It ______________ a beautiful day. Birds ______________ singing and the sun ______________ shining. There ______________ no clouds in the sky. Children ______________ playing in the sand boxes. Some mothers ______________ talking, others ______________ reading.

Everyone ______________ happy. That ______________ the best day I had this week! It ______________ fun to see that all the children ______________ having such a great time.
3. FIRST: Underline the subject in each sentence. THEN: Write the sentences in the simple past tense on the line provided.

a) Paul and David are excited about being on the same soccer team.

b) I am thrilled to come to your wedding.

c) The actors are late for their rehearsal.

d) This is definitely one of your best accomplishments.

e) We are really happy to have found a solution to our problem.

f) The story I told you is basically what happened.
PRACTICING THE GRAMMAR RULE
(cont.

4. Put the correct form of the verb TO BE (present or past tense) in the following sentences.
   Go back to the rule: To be – simple present tense if you need to.

   a) It ___________ often difficult to admit being wrong.

   b) Luis and Karl ______________ present at yesterday’s meeting.

   c) The bride and groom _________ married this morning. The ceremony ________ beautiful!

   d) The family reunion __________ over and what a wonderful gathering it ___________

   e) There __________ no such thing as luck. You must work hard if you want to succeed.
f) Last year’s talent show participants ___________ extremely talented.

g) Getting to see a live concert next week __________ a dream come true.

h) No matter how difficult your problems __________ there __________ always a solution.

i) The teachers ___________ so understanding. They gave me a second chance.

j) They ___________ wise to eat healthy and to exercise as much as they do.

k) Why ___________ it always so hard to say goodbye?

l) Where ____________ you when we needed you?

m) Listening to you ___________ all I do! Try listening to me for once!

n) He did not think the interview ____________ too long.

o) Whatever you decide __________ fine with me.
Imagine you have just witnessed a robbery. A police officer asks you to describe the thief or thieves with as many details as you can remember. Don't hesitate to include other important information surrounding the incident (time, other witnesses, useful observations...).

e.g. One of the robbers was a man. He was around 25 years old. He was short and thin. His eyes were brown and his hair was black. He was wearing... The other robber was older. He was about 39 or 40 years old. He... It was late. It was around 10 o'clock. My sister was with me. She was afraid... The house was empty. The next-door neighbours were absent. They were on vacation...
REGULAR VERBS – SIMPLE PAST TENSE
UNDERSTANDING THE GRAMMAR RULE

Take a look at the underlined verbs:

1) I played soccer yesterday.
2) You stayed up late.
3) She (He) decided to leave.
4) It ended quite early.
5) We watched the movie.
6) They painted the room.

1. Fill in the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject (pronoun)</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I</td>
<td>played</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Underline the time period these 6 verbs occur in:  PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE

3. What ending is common to all 6 verbs? ____________________________

4. Is this ending used with all the pronouns? ____________________________

5. What verb tense uses this specific ending? ____________________________
UNDERSTANDING THE GRAMMAR RULE
(cont.)

SIMPLE PAST VERBS ENDING IN -ED ARE CALLED REGULAR VERBS.

THE RULE: Regular simple past verbs describe actions or situations that happened in the past. In English, you normally form the simple past of regular verbs by adding ed to the verb:
   e.g. listened, liked, learned…

BUT there are regular verbs that differ slightly in the basic application of this ed rule. Examine this chart to learn how to always correctly spell the past tense of regular verbs.

SPELLING OF -ED VERBS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>END OF VERB</th>
<th>-ED FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rule 1: consonant + -E e.g. smile</td>
<td>add -D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. smiled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule 2: one vowel + one consonant* e.g. stop</td>
<td>double the consonant, add -ED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never double X (e.g. fixed) or W (e.g. snowed)</td>
<td>e.g. stopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule 3: two vowels + one consonant e.g. rain</td>
<td>add -ED: do not double the consonant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. rained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule 4: two consonants e.g. help</td>
<td>add -ED: do not double the consonant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. helped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule 5: consonant + -Y e.g. study</td>
<td>change -Y to -i, add -ED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule 6: vowel + -Y e.g. play</td>
<td>add -ED: do not change -Y to -i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. played</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For verbs with two syllables or more ending in a vowel and a consonant, the consonant:
  • is doubled if the stress is on the last syllable: occurred, referred, preferred…
  • is not doubled if the stress is not on the last syllable: e.g. opened, discovered, developed…
1. Put the verbs in parentheses in the simple past tense.
   Refer to the previous chart to insure correct spelling of the verbs.

   a) They _____________ for the bus for 30 minutes. (wait)

   b) The rabbit _____________ to its hiding place. (hop)

   c) They _____________ on me to help out. (count)

   d) The men _____________ the heavy parcels to the upper floor. (carry)

   e) We _____________ the play. We _____________ it to last one we saw. (enjoy) (prefer)

   f) The teacher rapidly _____________ the answers on the blackboard. (erase)

   g) They all _____________ on coming with me. (insist)

   h) We _____________ her everything would be fine. (assure)

   i) The women _____________ the accusations. (deny)

   j) The children _____________ their hands together to make them warm. (rub)

   k) His answer _____________ he was against the proposal. (imply)

   l) She _____________ up her bag and _____________ the door. (pick) (close)

   m) I _____________ for nothing because things _____________ out well. (worry) (turn)
n) The audience ____________ loudly at the end of the show. (clap)

o) The car ____________ to start. A repairman ____________ it to the garage. (fail) (tow)

p) That cake ____________ so good that I ____________ another piece. (taste) (want)

q) What ____________ at the party? – Oh, we ____________ all night. (happen) (dance)

r) I ____________ and ____________ the clothes before putting them away. (press) (fold)

s) The boy ____________ the vase on the floor and then he ____________. (drop) (cry)

t) The mother ____________ when her daughter ____________ her. (smile) (kiss)

2. FIRST: Look at the following text. Underline all the verbs in the SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE only.

HINT: There are 40 simple present verbs in all.

Go back to the rules: • To be – simple present tense and
• Verbs – simple present tense if you need to.

My sister answers the phone and asks who is calling. The person identifies himself and repeats his name. I walk in and listen. My sister hands me the phone. I talk into the receiver and inquire about the call. The person tries to sell me something. He persuades me that I need a magazine subscription badly. I listen to him. I smile to myself and even laugh a little. What a good salesman he is! I yawn
and count the minutes his speech lasts. He dreams about selling me a subscription and believes himself lucky to sell me one. I listen. I nearly accept his offer then I suddenly change my mind.

I explain to him why I am not interested. He insists but I refuse his offer. I thank him and I place the receiver on the phone. I expect him to call again but the phone stays silent. I rub my eyes.

I decide to relax before I wash up and brush my teeth. I pass the time reading a boring book before going to bed... It suddenly occurs to me: I regret not having subscribed to the magazine…

NOW: Change the verbs you just underlined into the simple past tense as you rewrite the text on the lines.
PRACTICING THE GRAMMAR RULE
(cont.)
USING THE GRAMMAR RULE ACTIVITY

FIRST: List 15 verbs which have a regular past tense. If you can, come up with different verbs from the ones worked on up to now.

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

NOW: Write 15 sentences where each of the 15 regular verbs is adequately used and correctly conjugated in the simple past tense.

1. _______________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________

3. _______________________________________________________

4. _______________________________________________________

5. _______________________________________________________

6. _______________________________________________________

7. _______________________________________________________

8. _______________________________________________________

9. _______________________________________________________

10. _______________________________________________________

11. _______________________________________________________
ACTIVITY (cont.)

12. __________________________

13. __________________________

14. __________________________

15. __________________________