

Common grammar exceptions

Almost every grammar rule in English has some exceptions to it. In this lesson, we will take a look at these grammar exceptions that often frustrate ESL students.

Use of auxiliary verbs in the simple present and simple past tense

You have already learned that the simple present tense is used to talk about general truths and habits. Read the sentences given below.

My sister lives in New York. (Affirmative)

My sister does not live in New York. (Negative)

Does my sister live in New York? (Interrogative)

I agree with you. (Affirmative)

I do not agree with you. (Negative)

Do I agree with you? (Interrogative)

As you can see, affirmative sentences in the simple present tense do not have an auxiliary verb.

However, this rule has an exception. And this exception adds extra emphasis to the sentence.

I do agree with you. (More emphatic than I agree with you.) This sentence means that I really agree with you.

She does want to come with us. (= She really wants to come with us.)

He does want to quit smoking. (= He really wants to quit smoking.) (NOT He does wants to quit smoking.)

She does want to go on a vacation.

I do respect him.

Note that after do and its forms, the infinitive is used without the marker -s.

Exception 2

Simple present tense to talk about future

The simple present tense can be used to talk about scheduled future events. Common verbs that can be used with the simple present tense in this way are: arrive, depart, leave, start, begin, open, end etc.

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The school reopens on Monday.

The train arrives at 4.30.