

## Incorrect verb forms

ESL students often find it difficult to use the correct verb form when combining with another verb. In English, the auxiliaries has, have and had are always used with past participle forms. Do, does and did are always used with infinitives. The primary auxiliary be (is, am, are, was and were) can be used with both present and past participle forms.

Study the examples given below.

She is writing a book.

She has written a book. (NOT She has writing a book.)

Does she write well? (NOT Does she writing well?)

Did she come? (NOT Did she came?)

It is important to know what kind of verbs go with auxiliaries.

It should also be noted that when a verb is used as a noun, it must be in the -ing form. In grammars these are called gerunds.

Active and passive forms are also confused.

Incorrect: I was very interesting in the lecture.

Correct: I was very interested in the lecture.

Incorrect: We were questioning by the police officer.

Correct: We were questioned by the police officer.

Incorrect: He has put in prison for life.

Correct: He was put in prison for life.

Mistakes like these are not surprising because be (is, am, are, was and were) is use to make active

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continuous forms and passive verb forms.

She was writing. (Active – past continuous)

She was punished. (Passive – past simple)

Past participles are used to make both passive verb forms and active perfect tenses.

Compare:

She was asking. (Past continuous – active)

She was asked. (Simple past – passive)

She has asked. (Present perfect – active)