

More on leaving out words after auxiliary verbs

A

To avoid repeating words from a previous clause or sentence we use an auxiliary verb (**be, have, can, will, would**, etc.) instead of a whole verb group or instead of a verb and what follows it:

- She says she's finished, but I don't think she **has**. (*instead of ... has finished.*)
- 'Would any of you like to go to Paris?' 'I **would**.' (*instead of I would like to go to Paris.*)

If there is more than one auxiliary verb in the previous clause or sentence, we leave out all the auxiliary verbs except the first instead of repeating the main verb. Alternatively, we can use two (or more) auxiliary verbs:

- 'They **could have been** delayed by the snow.' 'Yes, they **could**.' (*or ... could have (been).*)

B

If there is no auxiliary verb in the previous clause or sentence, or if the auxiliary is a form of **do**, we can use a form of **do** instead of repeating the main verb. We use **do** when the main verb is a present simple form and **did** when it is a past simple form:

- Mona **plays** golf on Saturdays, and I **do** too. (*instead of ... and I play golf on Saturdays too.; '... and so do I' is also possible*)
- 'I **didn't steal** the money.' 'No one thinks that you **did**.' (*instead of ... thinks that you stole it.; 'No one thinks so' is also possible.*)

If **be** is the main verb in the previous clause or sentence, we repeat a form of the verb **be**:

- 'The children **are** noisy again.' 'They always **are**.'

If **have** or **have got** is the main verb in the previous clause or sentence, we can usually use a form of either **do** or **have**:

- 'Do you think I **have** a chance of winning?' 'Yes, I think you **have**.' (*or ... you do.; 'Yes, I think so' is also possible.*)
- Even if he **hasn't got** a map himself, he may know someone who **has**. (*or ... who does.*)

However, if we use **have + noun** in the previous clause or sentence to talk about actions (**have a shower, have a shave, have a good time**, etc.) we prefer **do**:

- I wasn't expecting to *have a good time* at the party, but I **did**.

Note that sometimes we can use either **do, be** or **have** with a similar meaning (see also C):

- I asked Clara to tidy her room, and she **has / did**. ('has' replaces 'has tidied her room'; 'did' replaces 'tidied her room'.)

C

If we use **have** as an auxiliary verb, we can often follow it with **done** instead of repeating the main verb. This happens particularly in spoken English:

- 'She's never made a mistake before.' 'Well, she **has (done)** this time.'

However, this is usually not possible when the verb being substituted is intransitive:

- 'They've already gone.' 'I don't think Daniel **has**.' (*not ... Daniel has done.*)

Similarly, after a *modal* auxiliary verb (**can, could, may, might, must, ought to, shall, should, will, would**) we can use **do**, particularly in spoken English:

- 'Will you be seeing David today?' 'I **might (do)**.'

Sometimes we can use **be** instead of **do** with a similar meaning (see also D):

- 'Will you be seeing Felix today?' 'I **might (do / be)**.' ('do' replaces 'see Felix today'; 'be' replaces 'be seeing Felix today'.)

D

If we use **be** as an *auxiliary* verb in the previous clause or sentence, we can use **be** after a modal:

- 'Is Ella staying for lunch?' 'Yes, I think she **will (be)**.' (*or ... she will do.*)

However, if **be** is used as a *main* verb in the previous clause or sentence, or as an auxiliary verb within a passive, we can usually leave out **be** after a modal in informal contexts only. Compare:

- 'Lina's late again.' 'I thought she **might (be)**.' *and*
- It has been found that the comet is made entirely of gas, as it was predicted it **would be**.

Exercises

64.1 Make B's replies shorter by crossing out some of the words in italics. Give alternatives if possible. **A**

- 1 A: Have you ever played squash before? B: Yes, I *have played squash before.*
- 2 A: I suppose we should have booked tickets. B: Yes, we *should have booked tickets.*
- 3 A: Will you be staying in Brazil permanently? B: Yes, we *will be staying in Brazil permanently.*
- 4 A: All the parking places will probably have been taken by now.
B: Yes, I'm sure they *will have been taken by now.*
- 5 A: Have you had dinner yet? B: No, I *haven't had dinner yet.*
- 6 A: Are you going to Katalin's party? B: Yes, I *am going to Katalin's party.*
- 7 A: If Diane hadn't given you a lift, you would have missed the train.
B: Yes, I *would have missed the train.*
- 8 A: Can you see Joe anywhere? B: No, I *can't see him anywhere.*
- 9 A: Did you see that cyclist go through the red light? He couldn't have been looking.
B: No, he *couldn't have been looking.*

64.2 Complete the sentences with an appropriate form of **do**, **be** or **have** (plus any alternatives). Put brackets around the word if it can be omitted, and write **(done)** after forms of **have** where this might be added. **B & C**

- 1 I haven't finished doing the translation yet, but I will *have (done)* by tomorrow morning.
- 2 As a child I always enjoyed watching cartoons on TV, and I still
- 3 A: Has the post arrived yet? B: No, I don't think it
- 4 Have a shower if you want, but take a towel from the cupboard when you
- 5 A: It costs a fortune to rent a flat in the city centre. B: I'm sure it must
- 6 I was hoping Ryan had an electric drill that I could borrow, but he
- 7 I'm not a member of the tennis club myself, but I know someone who
- 8 I told the class that they had to hand in their books by nine and they all
- 9 A: Have you got a copy of *Great Expectations*? B: Yes, I think I
- 10 A: I've got £100 with me. Will that be enough? B: It should

64.3 Complete the sentences with **might**, **should**, **will** or **would**, (plus any alternatives). If necessary, write **be** after the modal, or **(be)** if it is possible to omit it. **D**

- 1 It's not snowing at the moment, but they say it *will / might (be)*
- 2 Chris was cleaning the house when I got home, as I hoped he
- 3 A: Are they staying for lunch? B: They I'll ask them.
- 4 A: Are you revising a lot for the exams? B: Not as much as I
- 5 The company has not been as successful as it was claimed it
- 6 Natalie says she's very sorry – as she
- 7 The book is a bestseller, as we hoped it
- 8 A: My photograph was awarded first prize. B: I thought it

