

BASE (V)	PAST TENSE (V-ed ₁)	-ed PARTICIPLE (V-ed ₂)
uphold	upheld	upheld
upset	upset	upset
wake	woke, waked	woken, waked
wear	wore	worn
weave	wove	woven
wed	wedded, wed	wedded, wed
weep	wept	wept
wet	wetted, wet	wetted, wet
win	won	won
wind	wound	wound
withdraw	withdrew	withdrawn
withhold	withheld	withheld
withstand	withstood	withstood
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written

NOTE In BrE the verb *fit* is regular, but in AmE *fit* is an alternative to *fitted* in the past and the -ed participle. *Hang* has also the regular form *hanged* for the past and the -ed participle in the sense 'put to death by hanging'.

Primary verbs and modal auxiliaries

Verbs as operators

Auxiliaries have one important syntactic function in common: they become the OPERATOR when they occur as the first verb of a finite verb phrase (cf 3.19). The main verb BE and (sometimes, especially in BrE) the main verb HAVE are also operators when they are the only verb in the verb phrase. On the other hand, only the auxiliary DO is an operator (as in 'She does not know me'), not the main verb DO (as in 'She does a lot of work').

Operators share the following main characteristics:

- To negate a finite clause, we put *not* immediately after the operator.
Contrast:
She *may* do it. ~ She *may not* do it.
She *saw* the play. ~ *She *saw not* the play.
 - To form an interrogative clause, we put the operator in front of the subject (subject-operator inversion). Contrast:
He will speak first. ~ *Will* he speak first?
He plans to speak first. ~ **Plans* he to speak first?
- Subject-operator inversion occurs also in sentences with introductory negatives or semi-negatives (cf 10.35f):

At no time was the entrance left unguarded.

- The operator can carry nuclear stress to mark a finite clause as positive rather than negative:

Won't you try again? ~ Yes, I **WILL** try again.

You must speak to the teacher. ~ I **HAVE** spoken to him.

The function of this emphatic positive is to deny a negative which has been stated or implied.

- The operator functions in a range of elliptical clauses where the rest of the predication is omitted (cf 12.20). The clause is understood to repeat the omitted part.

Won't you try again? ~ Yes, I **WILL**.

~ No, I **CAN'T**.

If there is no operator in a corresponding positive declarative sentence, the dummy (or 'empty') operator DO is introduced under the above conditions:

- She saw the play. ~ She *did not* (or: *didn't*) see the play.

- He plans to speak first. ~ *Does* he plan to speak first?

- You never listen to your mother. ~ *But I DO* listen to her.

- Do you drive a car? ~ Yes, I **DO**.

No, I **DON'T**.

The use of the operator DO is termed DO-SUPPORT.

The main verbs BE and HAVE are operators in these sentences:

I *haven't* a car. <esp BrE> Is she your sister?

NOTE

- The enclitic particle *n't* can be attached to most operators as a contraction of the negative word *not*, eg: *isn't*, *didn't*, *won't* (cf 3.13f). In addition, many operators have contracted forms:

BE: *am* ~ 'm; *is* ~ 's; *are* ~ 're

HAVE: *have* ~ 've; *has* ~ 's; *had* ~ 'd

modals: *will* ~ 'll; *would* ~ 'd

The final /t/ in the negative contraction is commonly not sounded. Notice that the contraction 's may represent either *is* or *has*, and that the contraction 'd may represent either *had* or *would*.

- The contractions mentioned in [a] are simplified forms that are institutionalized in both speech and writing. They are to be distinguished from cases of phonological reduction only, eg /kən/ in the pronunciation of *can*.

Characteristics of modal auxiliaries

Certain characteristics additional to those listed in 3.11 apply specifically to modal auxiliaries:

- They are followed by the bare infinitive (ie the base form of the verb alone without a preceding *to*):

You *will ask* the questions. They *might have stolen* it.