

## กริยาช่วยผู้ทรงพลังที่สุดในภาษาอังกฤษ

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### บทคัดย่อ

กริยาช่วยในภาษาอังกฤษมีอยู่ 24 คำ แบ่งออกเป็น 2 กลุ่ม คือ กลุ่ม Main auxiliary verbs และกลุ่ม Modal กลุ่ม Main auxiliary verbs แบ่งออกเป็น 3 กลุ่มซึ่งได้แก่กลุ่ม verb to be 5 คำ กลุ่ม verb to do 3 คำ กลุ่ม verb to have 3 คำ และกลุ่ม Modal 13 คำ ในจำนวนกริยาช่วยทั้งหมดนี้ถือว่ากลุ่ม verb to be เป็นกลุ่มที่มีพลังมากที่สุดโดยพิจารณาจากจำนวนคำในกลุ่มมีมากที่สุด มีบทบาทในภาษามากที่สุดคือ นอกจากจะเป็นกริยาสำคัญหรือกริยาหลัก (main verb) ของประโยคแล้วยังทำหน้าที่เป็น Linking verb or Copulative verb ทำหน้าที่เชื่อมโยง complement ไปหาประธานหรือกรรม เพื่อบอกสภาพหรืออธิบายคุณสมบัติของประธานหรือ กรรมของประโยค และยังเป็นกริยาช่วย (auxiliary or helping verb) ที่สำคัญที่สุดโดยสามารถช่วยตัวเองในการเปลี่ยนรูปประโยคจากประโยคบอกเล่าเป็นประโยคคำถามที่ต้องตอบรับหรือปฏิเสธ (Yes / No question) ซึ่งกริยาสำคัญหรือกริยาหลักอื่น ๆ ทำไม่ได้ กริยาสำคัญหรือกริยาหลักอื่น ๆ ต้องอาศัยกลุ่ม verb to do เข้าช่วยจึงจะเปลี่ยนรูปประโยคให้เป็นอย่างอื่นได้ นอกจากนั้นกริยากลุ่ม verb to be ยังมีการใช้ที่แตกต่างจากกริยาช่วยกลุ่มอื่น ๆ อีกมากมายทั้งการบอกพจน์ของคำนาม บอกกาล และประกอบกับคำอื่น ๆ เป็นสำนวนที่มีความหมายหลากหลายในภาษา ด้วยคุณสมบัติเหล่านี้จึงทำให้กริยาช่วยกลุ่ม verb to be เป็นกริยาช่วยที่ทรงพลังที่สุดในภาษาอังกฤษ

**คำสำคัญ :** auxiliary verbs (helping verbs), the most powerful

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## Verb to be: The Most Powerful Auxiliary Verb in English

Areeluck Harnmontree

### Abstract

There are 24 auxiliary verbs which are classified into 2 groups: Main auxiliary verbs and Modal. The main auxiliary verbs are divided into verb to be (5), verb to do (3), and verb to have (3). The modal group has 13 words. Among these auxiliaries, verb to be group is considered the most powerful, considering from the number of words in the group, its roles and functions in the language. Verb to be group can function as a main verb of the sentence as other verbs can. They can also be linking verbs or copulative verbs linking the complement to the subject or the object showing their states and characteristics. Moreover, they can be moved to the front of the sentence, in front of the subject, to form a Yes / No question when there is not any other auxiliary in the sentence. The sentences with other main verbs cannot be done like this. The verb to do group must be used as an auxiliary in front of the question, and the main verb comes after the subject. Verb to be group can also function as an auxiliary (a helping verb) indicating number (singular / plural) of nouns and tenses of the sentences. In addition, they go together with some other words forming a variety of expressions giving different meanings which are very useful in the language. Because of their special characteristics and their important roles and functions in the language, they are considered the most powerful auxiliaries in English.

**Keywords:** auxiliary verbs (helping verbs), the most powerful

## Introduction

When thinking of something powerful, for example, a country or a nation, we look at its population or people, how each one can help itself, the roles and functions of its own, and how it can help other countries. As we can see, the United States of America, and China are considered powerful countries because of their big sizes with a large number of population or people. They are rich in natural resources. They are dependent, helping themselves. They also help other poor countries in many ways.

In the same way, the verb to be group is considered the most powerful auxiliary in the language because of many aspects—its various forms, how they can help themselves, how they can help other main verbs, and their roles and functions in the language. Let's consider the following aspects to see whether the verb to be group is really the most powerful auxiliary:

## Auxiliaries:

An auxiliary verb (abbreviated AUX ) is a verb that adds functional or grammatical meaning to the clause in which it appears, such as to express tense, aspect, modality, voice, emphasis, etc. Auxiliary verbs usually accompany a main verb. The main verb provides the main semantic content of the clause.

Walsh, J. Martyn and Walsh, Anna Kathleen (1959 : 15) said that an auxiliary verb is a verb which helps another verb. A verb with its helper or helpers is a verb phrase. Some verbs used as auxiliaries are *do, did, be* (and its various forms), *have, may, can, must, will, shall, might, could, would, and should*. Among these auxiliaries, *do, be* and *have* are three main auxiliary verbs. All of these main auxiliary verbs serve not only as auxiliaries but also as main verbs:

Jack *did* bring his book. (auxiliary to emphasize)

Jack *did* good work. (main verb)

From the examples above, we can see that a basic sentence is composed of two main parts: NOUN PHRASE + VERB PHRASE, but it is not necessary that every sentence must have the same structure since these two parts of a sentence can have many different choices. For example, a noun phrase can be “Paul, they, a friend, nobody, or some of those flowers”, etc. But a variety of sentence structures depends on a variety of verb phrases, not noun phrases. As we have known, an auxiliary verb is the choice making a variety of verb phrases in the main verb phrases of the sentences (Harmmontree. 2003 : 86).

A main verb phrase is made up of a main verb together with other words coming after it, except the auxiliary endings, such as -s, -ed, and -ing. If the main verb is the same, the main verb phrase will be the same, too. But if there are many verbs of which their main features tell us that there are a lot of main verb types, there are a lot of main verb phrases, too:

Willy is brave.

Willy is a St. Bernard.

Willy is outside.

In the example sentences above, the main verb is “be”, and after the main verb, it can be an adjective, a noun phrase, or an adverb of place. The main feature of verb “be” can be explained in the rule “be [+\_\_ completer]. The word “completer” can be explained in the rule COMPLETER → {ADJECTIVE / NOUN PHRASE / PLACE AVERB} (Harnmontree. 2003 : 86).

The main verb “be” is different from other main verbs in many ways:

1) It cannot be followed by an adverb of manner, such as quickly, happily, hungrily, etc. This can be explained in the rule BE [ + V / +\_\_ completer / -\_\_ manner ]. This is the same as linking verbs which cannot be followed by adverbs of manners. Some of the linking verbs are: act, appear, become, feel, get, grow, look, prove, remain, run, seem, smell, sound, stay, taste, and turn.

2) It has 5 various forms: am, is, are, was, and were, while other main verbs have only 3 forms.

3) When the sentence with the main verb “be” of present and past form is changed into a Yes / No question—a question that can be answered with Yes or No, the verb to be can be moved to the front of the sentence using a T- rule named T- Question, which moves TENSE + AUX to the front of the Noun Phrase. If the main verb is not a verb to be, and it is without any other auxiliaries, it cannot move to the front of the Noun Phrase (Harnmontree. 2003 : 164—165).

### Types of Auxiliaries:

There are 24 auxiliaries in English which can be classified as follow:

1. Verb to be:

Present Form: is, am, are

Past Form: was, were

## 2. Verb to do:

Present Form: do, does

Past Form: did

## 3. Verb to have:

Present Form: have, has

Past Form: had

## 4. Modal verbs:

There are 4 pairs:     can – could  
                               will – would  
                               shall – should  
                               may – might

and special forms: must, dare, need, ought to, and used to.

All these auxiliaries can be arranged into the diagram below:

**Diagram of Auxiliary Verbs**

AUXILIARYVERB GROUP (3 MAIN AUXILIARIES)	TENSE	
	Present	Past
Verb to be	is, am, are	was, were
Verb to do	does, do	did
Verb to have	has, have	had
MODAL (SPECIAL AUXILIARY VERBS)		
1) Four Pairs	can	could
	will	would
	shall	should
	may	might
2) Expressions with “to”	ought to	used to
3) Three single words	must	dare     need

From the table above, we can see that auxiliary verbs are divided into two big groups: 3 main auxiliary verb groups and modal group. Three main auxiliary verb groups are verb to be, verb to do, and verb to have. Each group has its own functions in a sentence. All of them can function as both a main verb and an auxiliary verb as follow.

**Verb to be as a main verb:**

**Present Tense**

I **am** a journalist

He **is** a famous engineer.

They **are** politicians.

**Past Tense**

I **was** a journalist..

He **was** a famous engineer.

They **were** politicians.

**Verb to do as a main verb:**

I **do** my job.

He **does** his duty.

They **do** their work.

I **did** my job.

He **did** his duty.

They **did** their work.

**Verb to have as a main verb:**

I **have** a new car.

He **has** a new job.

They **have** many friends.

I **had** a new car..

He **had** a new job.

They **had** many friends.

When these three main auxiliary groups function as an auxiliary, we can see the differences among them. In changing the form of affirmative sentences into Yes/No questions or interrogative forms, verb to be group can help themselves by moving themselves to the front of the sentences. Verb to do group and verb to have group as the main verbs cannot be moved to the front of the sentences to make the sentence questions. They have to use verb to do group to add in front of the sentences, for example:

**Verb to be as an auxiliary verb:**

**Am** I a journalist?

**Is** he a famous engineer?

**Are** they politicians?

**Was** I a journalist?

**Was** he a famous engineer?

**Were** they politicians?

Notice that there is only **one verb** in the sentences.

**Verb to do as an auxiliary verb in questions:**

**Do** I **do** my job?

**Does** he **do** his duty?

**Do** they **do** their work?

**Do** I **have** a new car?

**Does** he **have** a new job?

**Do** they **have** many friends?

**Did** I **do** my job?

**Did** he **do** his duty?

**Did** they **do** their work?

**Did** I **have** a new car?

**Did** he **have** a new job?

**Did** they **have** many friends?

Notice that there are **two verbs** in the sentences: **one** (the one in front of the sentence) is an auxiliary, **the other** is the main verb.

When verb to do and verb to have are main verbs, they must stay in the sentences after the subjects of the sentences. Auxiliary verb “do” is added in front of the sentences depending on the number of the subject and the tense. So every sentence having verb to do and verb to have as a main verb must have an auxiliary verb “do”, either present or past form added in front of the sentence to make it question or interrogative form and negative form.

**Verb to do as an auxiliary verb in negative sentences:**

I **don't do** my job.

I **didn't do** my job.

He **doesn't do** his duty.

He **didn't do** his duty.

They **don't do** their work.

They **didn't do** their work.

I **don't have** a new car.

I **didn't have** a new car.

He **doesn't have** a new job.

He **didn't have** a new job.

They **don't have** many friends.

They **didn't have** many friends.

For modal group, they express meanings such as obligation, possibility, necessity, etc., which reflect somebody's (often the writer's) attitudes towards the state, event, etc. expressed by the verb phrase. Often, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact **type** of meaning conveyed by a modal auxiliary verb. (*Lund University. 18 February 2014*)

Most modal auxiliaries cannot be used as main verbs, except the two of the three single words, ‘dare’ and ‘need’.

In this article, the writer intend to explain to the readers how powerful the “verb to be and its various forms” are taking parts in the language, so let's consider the following aspects concerning the verb to be group:

1. The meaning of the word “powerful”
2. The number of members in the group
3. The number of members in each tense—present tense and past tense
4. The roles or functions of the verb to be group

**1. The meaning of the word “powerful”:**

According to the topic of this article, “What is the most powerful auxiliary verb in English?”, we need to make clear of the phrase “the most powerful” to answer this question by considering the meaning of the word “powerful” before doing anything.

Referring to The Newbury House Dictionary of American English, ([Rideout. 1996](#)), the word “powerful” means 1) having a lot of power and influence: He is a **powerful** man in the Senate. 2) strong or effective, having great force: That racing car has a **powerful** engine.

## 2. The number of members in the group:

From the diagram above, we can see that the verb to be group has more members than other groups. It has 5 members while the other groups have only 2 or 3.

## 3. The number of members in each tense—present tense and past tense:

From the diagram, we can see that the verb to be group has more members in each tense than those in other groups. It has 3 words in the present tense and 2 in the past tense while the other groups have only 1 or 2 in the present tense and only 1 in the past tense.

Let us look at the forms, tenses and roles of verb to be.

### Present Tense

Singular	Negative	Contraction	Plural	Negative	Contraction
I	<i>am</i>	( <i>am not</i> )	We	<i>are</i>	( <i>aren't</i> )
You	<i>are</i>	( <i>aren't</i> )	You	<i>are</i>	( <i>aren't</i> )
He / She / It	<i>is</i>	( <i>isn't</i> )	They	<i>are</i>	( <i>aren't</i> )

### Past Tense

Singular	Negative	Contraction	Plural	Negative	Contraction
I	<i>was</i>	( <i>wasn't</i> )	We	<i>were</i>	( <i>weren't</i> )
You	<i>were</i>	( <i>weren't</i> )	You	<i>were</i>	( <i>weren't</i> )
He / She / It	<i>was</i>	( <i>wasn't</i> )	They	<i>were</i>	( <i>weren't</i> )

### Present Participle Form

*being*

### Past Participle Form

*been*

## 4. The roles or functions of the verb to be group:

### 4.1 The roles or functions of verb to be in general:

#### 4.1.1 As a main verb: (Pickering. 2000 : 46)

- 1) meaning “to exist, live, or breathe”:
  - The tradition *has been* here for centuries.
- 2) meaning “be situated, be located, be positioned”:
  - The pen *is* on the table.
- 3) meaning “occur, happen, take place, come about, come to pass, arise, develop, transpire”;
  - The film *is* on tonight.
- 4) meaning “survive, persist, remain, stay, continue, endure, prevail, last”:
  - I *have* always *been* there.



5) When verb to be comes after the word “there”, which is a pronoun, used to begin a statement (There is / There are), giving the meaning of an existence of something, we normally begin the sentence with “**There is**” or “**There are**” as shown on the chart below:

Form	Singular	Plural
Positive	There is a glass of milk.	There are two glasses of water.
Negative	There isn't any milk.	There aren't two cups.
Question	Is there a glass of orange juice?	Are there six glasses of water?
Short Answers	Yes, there is.	Yes, there are.
	No, there isn't.	No, there aren't.

#### 4.1.2 As a connecting / linking verb:

1) to show someone or something is the same as the subject of the sentence: George Washington (subject) **was** (linking verb) the first president (the same as Washington) of the USA.

2) to show membership in a group: I **am** a lecturer at HCU. She **is** a student of English. They **are** members of the club.

3) to show a characteristic: The sky **is** blue. The mangoes **are** yellow.

4) to show position and location: Bangkok **is** in Thailand. The rug **is** on the floor.

5) to show condition or situation: The weather **is** good. The condition of his health **is** excellent. The children **were** in a bad situation

6) It is used for naming people or things, and describing or giving more information:

- Today **is** Monday.
- Who **'s** that? It **'s** my brother.
- She **'s** a great beauty.
- Life **is** unfair.
- The fact **is** that we don't have enough money.
- The problem **is** getting it all done in the time available..

4.1.3. **As an imperative:**

1) **be good:** behave well:

- *Be* good, or you will be punished.

2) **be my guest:** take something:

- *Be* my guest and help yourself to the potato chips.

3) **be well:** stay healthy

4.1.4 **As a prefix used with a noun or verb as in the following:**

1) **bedeck:** to decorate, to adorn:

- The walls were *bedecked* with flags and the tables with flowers.

2) **bedevil:** to annoy someone a lot, to distress:

- She is *bedeviled* by a bad back that hurts often.

3) **befall:** to have something bad happen:

- A car accident *befell* him.

4) **benefit:** to be suitable and correct:

- As *befits* a wedding, the bride wore a white dress.

5) **befriend:** to become friends with someone:

- He *befriended* the boy and taught him to swim.

6) **beget:** - to produce: - The mother *begets* a child.

- to cause to happen: - War *begets* more war.

7) **begrudge:** to envy, not want someone else to have or do something:

- I *begrudge* him his wealth because he did not earn it.

8) **beguile:** - to cheat, to delude: She was *beguiled* by the man and lost all money to him.

- to charm: She is so beautiful that she *beguiles* every man she meets.

9) **behead:** to cut someone's head off, to decapitate:

- The traitor was *beheaded* at the king's order.

10) **behold:** to see, look at:

- *Behold* how beautiful the sunset looks!

11) **belabor:** to work or talk too long, repeat a point too often:

- She *belabored* how angry she felt until no one listened any more.

12) **belie:** to give a wrong idea:

- His soft words *belied* a hard heart.

13) **bemoan:** to feel sad about something, regret:

- She *bemoans* the fact that she did not finish high school.

14) **besiege**: to attack from all sides:

- An army **besieged** the fortress for days.

15) **bewail**: to express great sadness, to lament:

- He **bewailed** the death of his wife.

16) **bewitch**: to charm, to captivate:

- She is so charming that men are **bewitched** by her.

#### 4.1.5 As future reference:

1) **Be + to** forms (**is to / are to**): are quite formal and are usually used to communicate orders, commands, and instructions. They are also used to regulate behavior, rather in the manner of modal verbs such as *must* and *should*. **Be + to** forms commonly occur with conditional *if*-clauses:

- If we **are to** get there by five, we had better drive more quickly.

- They'll write if I'm on the shortlist. Otherwise, I **am to** assume I haven't got the job.

- What **is to** happen to all of us if they move the factory to the north of Thailand?

- He **is to** be promoted in August.

- They **are to** fly to Korea at lunchtime today.

2) Alternatives to **is to / are to** include **be due to** and **be about to**, which are more formal and are more likely to be used in written rather than spoken English:

- He **was about to** leave for the airport when he found that he'd left his passport in the hotel safe.

- The minister **is due to** speak at the conference.

- The town **is about to** be attacked.

3) When **be + to is combined with about**, it loses its authoritarian sense:  
 - I **was / am to** fly to America on Friday. (It sounds as if the person was / has been sent by an organization and has had little choice in the matter.)

- I **was about to** fly to America. (Something probably prevented the flight, or happened before it.)

- I **am about to** make some coffee. (Coffee is imminent or ready to be served soon! You might be offered some.)

4) **Be + to** forms and related forms in the past tense help us to refer to events in the past which were definitely planned (as in the context of a sports tournament) or are being completed at the time

5) **Be + from** is used to say where somebody was from or where their home is: She's *from* Italy.

#### 4.2 The roles or functions of verb to be in grammar

4.2.1 As a main verb indicating a number (singular or plural) of a noun:

- He *is* a nice *person*.
- They *are* nice *people*.

From these two sentences, we can see that the word *person* is a singular noun used with *is*, which is singular. The word *people* is a plural noun used with *are*, which is plural.

- Athletics *is* my favorite sport.
- Measles *is* a contagious viral disease that causes red spots on the body.
- What time *is* the news on television?
- Five million baht *was* stolen in the robbery.
- Three days *is* a long time to be without a job.
- Seven kilometers *is* not too far to walk as an exercise.
- The audience for her textbook *is* university students.

From the examples above, when we talk about *the names of subjects and diseases*, the word *news*, *a sum of money*, *a period of time*, *a distance*, and the word *audience*, we use a plural noun with a singular verb.

- The government *are* making decision to reduce taxes.
- The staff *are* not happy with their new working conditions.
- The police *are* not well-paid.
- Barcelona *are* going to win the champion this year.

From the examples above, the words *government*, *staff*, *police*, and *the names of sports teams* are considered plural.

4.2.2 As a main verb indicating tenses—present tense and past tense:

1) Present Simple Tense

- I *am* a student.
- Where *is* Tom?
- Tom *is* on holiday.
- Tomorrow *is* Wednesday.
- It *is* nine o'clock in the evening.
- Arthur and Deborah *are* at the opera.
- The radio *is* on in an expensive pub in the center of London.

- Most of the people there **are** not very interested in the news program.

From the examples above, we can see that in present simple tense, “**am**” is used only with the subject “**I**”; “**is**” is used with a singular noun or pronoun, and “**are**” is used with a plural noun or pronoun.

## 2) Past Simple Tense

- I **was** angry because Tom and Ann **were** late.
- **Was** Tom at work yesterday?
- Why **were** you so angry?
- She **was** not rush because she **was** not in a hurry.
- They **were** not able to come because they **were** very busy.
- My parents were born in Bristol and never lived anywhere else

From the examples above, we can see that in the past tense, “**was**” is used with a singular noun or pronoun, including with “**I**”; and “**were**” is used with a plural noun or pronoun.

### 4.2.3 As an auxiliary (helping) verb in the Present Continuous Tense and Past Continuous Tense

#### 1) Present Progressive (Continuous) Tense

- I **am learning** English.
- He / She **is watching** TV.
- You / We / They **are listening** to the teacher.
- **Am I disturbing** you?
- What **are** you **looking** at?
- Who **is** she **waiting** for?
- They **are not reading** the passage.

From the examples above, we can see that in the present continuous tense, “be” is used as an auxiliary (helping verb): **am + V(ing)** is used only with the subject “**I**”; **is + V(ing)** is used with a singular noun or pronoun, and **are+ V(ing)** is used with a plural noun or pronoun.

#### 2) Past Progressive (Continuous) Tense

- I **was taking** a shower when the phone rang.
- Mother **was making** when the news started.
- The children **were watching** TV when the light went out.
- She **was doing** the washing up when Joe arrived.

From the examples above, we can see that in the past continuous tense, “be” is used as an auxiliary (helping verb): **was + V(ing)** is used with a singular noun or pronoun, including with “I”, and **were+ V(ing)** is used with a plural noun or pronoun.

4.2.4 According to Harnmontree (2003 : 164-165, when changing the forms of sentences with the main verb “be”, or with the first auxiliary “be”—from affirmative (statement) to interrogative (question) or to negative, just move “be” to the front of the sentences to make a Yes / No question using T-Question Rule, or add “not” after “be” to make a negative sentence .

- I **am speaking** too fast. → **Am I speaking** too fast?
- She **is waiting** for a bus. → **Is she waiting** for a bus?
- They **are listening** to the news. → **Are they listening** to the news?
- You **were** here last night. → **Were** you here last night?
- I **am** listening to the news. → I **am not** listening to the news.
- **She is** watching TV. → She **is not** watching TV.
- They **are** interested in sciences. → They **are not** interested in sciences?

**NOTE:** If the main verb is not “be”, or there are not any other auxiliaries in the sentence, the verb phrase cannot be moved to the front of the sentence. This case must be done by using two different T-Rules: T-Question and T- DO Addition, rather than using only T-Question. This means that the verb phrase is moved to the front of the sentence, and Do must be added to the tense to give a Yes / No question. For example, 1) “I **am** speaking too fast”. → “**Am** I speaking too fast?” 2) You **are** interested in sciences.” → **Are** you interested in sciences?” 3) “ He **works** hard.” □ “**Does** he **work** hard?” 4) “They like football.” → “**Do** they **like** football?”

4.2.4 As a passive auxiliary, (helping) verb (be + en) is added to a verb phrase in a passive sentence to emphasize the importance of the object of the sentence. The sentence that can be changed into passive voice consists of a subject (NP<sup>1</sup>), a transitive verb phrase, and a direct object (NP<sup>2</sup>). The subject is affected by, rather than the performer of, the action. When writing a passive sentence, be + en is inserted between the auxiliary and the main verb while the subject and the object of the sentence takes each other’s place (position), then a preposition “by” is added in front of the object (the previous subject / NP<sup>1</sup>) as the example below:

Active Voice			Passive Voice			
<u>Willy</u>	<u>broke</u>	<u>the glass.</u>	→	<u>The glass</u>	<u>was broken</u>	<u>by Willy.</u>
NP <sup>1</sup>	VP	NP <sup>2</sup>		NP <sup>2</sup>	be + en	by NP <sup>1</sup>

In this sentence, NP<sup>1</sup> is the subject, and NP<sup>2</sup> is the direct object in the active sentence. Then NP<sup>1</sup> takes the place of NP<sup>2</sup>, and NP<sup>2</sup> takes the place of NP<sup>1</sup> in the passive sentence. Be + en (en is the past participle form of the main verb in the active sentence) is inserted between the NP<sup>2</sup> and NP<sup>1</sup>. Be is in past tense “**was**” because the tense in the active sentence is in past tense “**broke**”. Preposition “by” is put in front of the NP<sup>1</sup> to emphasize the performer. If the subject (NP<sup>1</sup>) is unknown or unspecified, such as someone, somebody, people, we, they, etc., the preposition “by” and the NP<sup>1</sup> are deleted as in the example below:

Someone broke the glass. → The glass was broken.

NP<sup>1</sup>    VP        NP<sup>2</sup>                    NP<sup>2</sup>            be + en

In the passive sentence, the auxiliary “be” indicates the tense of the sentence, or we can say that “be” has the same tense as the tense of the active sentence, but the number (singular or plural) depends on the new subject (NP<sup>2</sup>) or the subject of the passive sentence, for example,

1) “Someone **broke** those glasses.” → “Those glasses **were broken**.”

2) “We **can solve** this problem.” → “This problem **can be solved**.”

3) “Somebody **should have cleaned** the windows yesterday.”

→ “The windows **should have been cleaned** yesterday.”

Some verbs can have two objects, for example, offer:

“They **didn’t offer** Ann the job.” The two objects are “Ann” and “the job”, so it is possible to make two different passive sentences:

1) “Ann **wasn’t offered** the job.”

2) “The job **wasn’t offered** to Ann.”

It is more usual for the passive sentence to begin with the person (Murphy. 2017). Other verbs which can have two objects are: ask, tell, give, send, show, teach, pay, make, buy.

- I **was given** two hours to make my decision.

- The men **were paid** \$5,000 to do the job.

- **Have** you **been shown** the new program?

- You **will be asked** a lot of questions at the interview.

**Be born** is a passive verb, and it is usually past.

- Where **were** you **born**?

- I **was born** in Thailand.

**Being + past participle** functions as an NP, a direct object of some verbs:

- Hurry up! You know Mr. Miller hates **being kept** waiting.

- I remember **being given** a toy drum on my fifth birthday.
- He climbed over the wall without **being seen**.

“**Get**” can be used instead of “**be**” in the passive, mainly in informal spoken English while “**be**” can be used in all situations:

- There was fight at the party, but nobody **got** hurt.
- Ann **got** offered the job.
- The dog **got** run over by a car. (The dog **was** run over by chance.)

According to Murphy (2017), there are passive forms in the present and past tenses which are indicated by various forms of “**be**”:

- Present Simple: (is / am / are) + done
- Past Simple: (was / were) + done
- Present Continuous: (is / am / are) + being + done
- Past Continuous: (was were) + being + done
- Present Perfect: (has / have) + been + done
- Past Perfect: had + been + done

There is also some possibility of occurrence in the future tenses:

- Future Simple: will + be + done
- Future Continuous: will + be + being + done
- Future Perfect Continuous: will + have + been + done

**Be / Get used to** something = something is not new or strange for me

- I **am used to** the weather in this country.
- Frank **is used to** living alone.
- Westerners in Thailand have to **get used to** driving on the left.

“**Been to**” (a place) means “visited” (a place)

- I have **been to** Japan. = I have visited Japan; I went there, but now I have come back.

When comparing to “**gone to**”:

- Ann is on holiday. She has **gone to** Italy. = She is there now or she is on her way there.

In conclusion, verb to be group is the most powerful group among those auxiliary verbs explained above because of their various forms, their roles and functions in the language, and a variety of expressions forming from verb to be.



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