

THE ULTIMATE CHEAT CODE TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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The Ultimate Cheat Code to English Grammar: Cheat Your Way To Excellence
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The Ultimate Cheat Code.

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Finally, something that is simple and easy.



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ISBN: 978-1-0492-3228-7

First published in 2025



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About the Author

Rohan Coetzer's way of teaching English has been shaped by his journey that began in 2016, teaching students from different backgrounds and cultures—from pre-schoolers, teenagers and adults in China and Russia, to training people for the competitive labour market in Latvia.

His career is an interesting mix of linguistic precision and creative expression. As a certified graphic designer, published poet, exhibited photographer, and musician, he sees language as a creative system that connects people. This perspective allows him to simplify complex grammatical concepts into clear, relatable, and memorable lessons.

This book is a direct result of the dialogue between his students and him. The ideas and simplifications were developed and refined by answering his students' most challenging questions. It is an easy-to-use guide, tested and proven effective with real learners, designed to turn points of frustration into moments of understanding. In an effort to make grammar more accessible, understandable, and practical, some academic labels and terms have been replaced with clearer, everyday alternatives. These changes are always purposeful; they aim to break language barriers, without losing accuracy, and always staying true to the original academic sources.

How to use this book effectively

Colours are used to match ideas. For example: **should** – advice – You **should** save money for your old age. The colour connects the word to the place in the sentence. This also applies to sentence structures and other connected ideas. Colours are your friend, and they will guide you. There are only so many colours, so they get recycled as needed. Also, when a word has two colours, it shows where the two structures overlap.

You will notice that sometimes the examples are first and then the rule, and other times it is the rule and then the example. The difficulty of the rule determines how it is shown. I believe that this works best. I also tried to separate the explanations and examples with spaces, so you can easily identify them. Repeated phrases are used on purpose to help cement key points.

If you need to supplement this with a course, you can look in the index and match it to the part of the course you are doing. This book is a tool that can be used at any level from A1 to C1. So only use what you need and leave the rest for when you need them.

If you are using this book to self-study, I advise breaking each Chapter into what you need and looking for activities online. There are great websites with lots of printable and online practice. My advice is to search for activities online using the specific grammar point. That said, some of the resources I used to create this book are in the acknowledgement. Additionally, I have included my favourite websites for finding extra class activities.

The book is written in a conversational style to give you a more classroom feel. The structure is logical, so when you supplement with a course book, you might have to look at two or three Chapters in this book. Course books have their own aims and cluster things together as the authors seem fit.



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2.13 Patterns in tenses that help you cheat

Now that you have seen all the different tenses and why we use them, let's have a look at some cheat codes, in case you forget the structure. This will help you answer without making a structural error. Before we can go deeper, it is important to note that English is a structured language which has limits to how you can form and express your ideas.

1. First, let's look at simple forms. All simple forms, regardless of the tense, focus on a result. You can use both action and non-action (stative) verbs.

2. To **continue**, let's look at **continuous forms**. All continuous forms focus on a **process**, something that is **happening**, regardless of the tense. They always happen in a **time period** or at a **specific time**. You can only use action verbs, and they are all formed by using some form of **be** + **verb** + **ing**.

Tense	Subject	be + verb + ing	Time (specific or period)
Present Continuous	I	am eating	now.
Past Continuous	I	was eating	yesterday at 14h00.
Present Perfect Continuous	I	have been eating	for 10 minutes.
Past Perfect Continuous	I	had been eating	for 10 minutes.
Future Continuous	I	will be eating	tomorrow afternoon.
Future Perfect Continuous	I	will have been eating	for 20 minutes by 12h25.

3. Next, all **perfect** forms have some form of **have** + **3rd verb** (past participle), regardless of the tense.

Tense	Subject	have	3 rd verb (past participle)	Additional information
Present Perfect	She	has	eaten	breakfast.
Present Perfect Continuous	She	has	been	eating breakfast.
Past Perfect	She	had	eaten	breakfast.
Past Perfect Continuous	She	had	been	eating breakfast.
Future Perfect	She	will have	eaten	breakfast.
Future Perfect Continuous	She	will have	been	eating breakfast.

4. Finally, you have to remember the modal verb rule, which is **modal** + **infinitive** (without to), regardless of the tense or sentence structure. As we go through the book, you will notice why this is important.

Subject	modal	infinitive	Additional information
He	might	visit	me later today.
She	will	have	travelled to 5 countries.
It	would	be	nice if it rained.
Peter	can	drive	really well.
Jane	should	see	the countryside.



Did you know?

If you follow the above cheats, you can easily find the structure of advanced tenses by looking at the name. Simply break the name of the tense into the individual parts, and you have the structure. Let me show you.

Future – The most common association is **will** (just remember that will is a **modal** verb).

Perfect – You know that this is some form of **have + 3rd verb (past participle)**.

Continuous – You have seen this many times, it is **be + verb + ing**.

Future	Perfect	Continuous
will	have + 3 rd form	(3 rd form of be) been + verb + ing

Past – You use the **2nd form (past verb)**.

Perfect – You know that this is some form of **have + 3rd form of the verb**.

Past	Perfect
Had (past verb of have)	3 rd form of the main verb

Future – The most common association is **will** (just remember that **will** is a **modal** verb).

Continuous – You have seen this many times, it is **be + verb + ing**.

Future	Continuous
will	(modal + infinitive – the infinitive of be) be + verb + ing

And one more, so you can make the connection.

Modal – One of the 9 modal verbs, and it is **modal + infinitive**.

Note: **can** change to **could**, **can't** doesn't need to change, and **shall** is **extremely formal**.

Perfect – You know that this is some form of **have + 3rd form of the verb**.

Modal	Perfect
could	(have is the infinitive) have + 3 rd form of the main verb

Pattern recognition is one of the best tools you have to help you advance. Look for patterns, and you can form the structure. English is a limited language, so structures never change.



4.1 Modal: Intent, Advice, Hypothetical Situations (will, would, should)

Modal verbs express how we see actions and things. There is a fixed rule: **modal verb + infinitive (without to)**, and there are no exceptions. As you saw in the subheadings of Chapter 4, we will look at all the uses of modal verbs. **Many points and examples will repeat because you need a strong foundation to use them confidently. I also want to cement the idea of the rule and the meaning because it will influence the context, as you will see in Chapter 6.1.**

In this section, we will look at will, would and should.

You have already seen **will** for **future uses** in Chapter 2. We will not focus on those in this Chapter. Here we will look at all the other ways you can use **will**. The **negative** of **will** is **won't**.

The Present Simple is our usual choice for habits or typical behaviour, but you can use **will + infinitive** with an **adverb of frequency** to emphasise a feeling.

People who work hard **will usually achieve** success. – I make a strong general statement. Every lesson, he **will often jump** around. It is frustrating! – If you **emphasise will** in spoken **English**, it shows **annoyance**.

People who lived on farms **would usually work** long hours. – In this context, **would** shows the **past habit**. You saw this in Chapter 3.5, so please remember this can **only** be used with **action verbs**.

If you expect something to be normal or you believe it is true, you can also use will.

You had better clean the house; your mum **will expect** it from you.
If they keep wasting time, they **won't pass** the exam.

The next one can seem difficult because of the academic name: **degree of willingness**. Basically, this just shows if you want to do something or not. These are generally used with **promises, offers, threats, or refusal**.

He **will help** you move next week. – This is an **offer** or a **promise**, and I want to help.
She **won't sit** next to Peter in class. He is noisy. – This is a **refusal**, so I don't want to do this.
I **will call** the police! – This is a **threat**.

In the above examples, you can also use **be (not) going to** instead of **will**.

He **is going to help** you move next week. – This is an **offer** or a **promise**, and I want to help.
She **is not going to sit** next to Peter in class. He is noisy. – This is a **refusal**, so I don't want to do this.
I **am going to call** the police! – This is a **threat**.

When people are in situations or at places where being **formal** is important, you can use **will** to make a **request**.

Will all travellers please remain calm while we look for the child? – This is a **formal request**.



If you know someone is going to say **no** to a **request** or **they are busy**, you can use **won't** to show that you need help. The **negative question** is your more natural choice because you expect a negative response.

Person 1: **Won't** you please cook dinner?

Person 2: **Unfortunately, I can't**. The project is due tomorrow.

Sometimes you want to **emphasise** a **generalised statement** about **possible situations**, general **characteristics** or **properties**, or **neutral behaviour**. Your best option for the **emphasis** is **will**.

Life **will** always bring new possibilities. – This is a **generalisation** and **possible**.

Water **will** always be wet. – This is a **characteristic** or **property**.

People **will** always do what is best for them. – This is **neutral behaviour**.

So the final point about **will** is more stylistic and maybe a bit old-fashioned. To truly sound like a confident English speaker, use **shall** with **I** and **We** but only when you make **promises**, **offers**, or **suggestions**. However, if you use **will**, it isn't the end of the world. Many native speakers do it. As a final note, the negative of **shall** is **shan't**.

I shall clean the house, as you had a long day. – This is a **promise** or an **offer**.

We shall visit the park if the weather is nice. Do you agree? – This is a **suggestion**.

Now, let's have a look at **would**, which is used to talk about **made-up** or **imagined (hypothetical)** present or future situations. The negative is **wouldn't**.

My dream house **would** be an old wooden cabin in the forest. – It is something I want; it is a **hypothetical** situation.

People who **lived** on farms **would usually work** long hours. – You saw this earlier in this Chapter and in Chapter 3.5, to talk about past habits. I want to add one extra point here, it has to be clear that you are **referring to the past**, and remember this works with **action verbs** only.

When you think you know something (make an assumption), you can use **would + have + past participle (3rd form of the verb)**. Basically, you look at the situation and come to a conclusion. This is an alternative to **must + have + past participle**.

Person 1: She isn't home yet, and it is almost midnight.

Person 2: I know. She **would have been** working for 12 hours straight.

(Person 2: I know. She **must have been** working for 12 hours straight.)

There will be many situations in life where you want to be **polite**, **tactful**, or even a bit **unsure (tentative)**. In these situations, **would** sounds **softer**.

It **would** appear as if I am completely underqualified for this position. – This sounds **softer** and not as direct as saying "It appears that I am under-qualified."



You saw in Chapter 1.1 that we have something called phrasal verbs; don't confuse these with modal verbs. The reason I am saying this is that our next one has a phrasal verb form. We will look at **should** (**ought to** is the **phrasal verb**, and it is more formal than **should**) in this section. The negative is **shouldn't** (**ought not to**).

There are many uses for **should** and it makes more sense to show you using examples.

You **should** see a doctor if you feel ill. – Here, you give **advice**.

You **should** have booked the hotel sooner. – You are **criticising** or **saying** the **person did something wrong**.

The police **should** protect the citizens. – This is a **moral obligation** or **moral duty**.

I **should** save up for my future. – Here, **should** shows **something you want**.

I **should** have taken the job offer. – Now you are talking about **regret** or a **missed opportunity**.

It is cloudy, and it **should** rain tomorrow. – You **think something is true**.

You **should** pass your driving test, as you practiced for weeks. – You have evidence that leads to a **reasonable expectation**.

Should I maybe start dinner? – This is a **softer** and more **polite** way of making a **suggestion**.

If you want to be more official and formal, you can use **should** to express three things. I do have to point out that **should** is optional, and these **adjectives** are followed by a **that clause**.

The **adjectives** you use to show importance are: **important**, **vital** and **necessary**

It is **vital that** all staff members (**should**) **attend the meeting**.

If you are **shocked** or **surprised** and want to show an emotional reaction, you use: **surprising** and **shocking**

I think it is **shocking that** (**should**) **crime is so high**.

The last one is the easiest as it is a suggestion, and the **verb** is **suggest**.

I **suggest that** you (**should**) **clean your room before mum gets home**.

Finally, there are also some fixed expressions that we use with **would** to show talk about hypothetical or future preferences.

I **would rather** not discuss the problem. – Here we use **would** + **rather** to show preference.

I **would sooner** die than clean the bathroom – This is also a preference with **would** + **sooner**.

She **would just as soon take** the plane as the train. – This is another preference with **would** + **just as soon** + **infinitive**.

I **would have thought** you knew the system. – I make an assumption with **would** + **have thought**.



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ISBN: 978-1-0492-3228-7

First published in 2025