

A Brief Description of English Primary Auxiliary Verbs

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English Language has become a very important means of communication, similarly used as primary means of communication in the society. In the daily life, a language enables people to express the ideas and allows living and cooperating with other people. In addition, language is not only a form of communication, but it is also a form of social status. It means that inability to use language well can affect someone's status, even alter her/his personality.

At present, since English is as an international language, a number of scientists, scholars, journalists, etc. realize that they need to study language more deeply, especially in grammar. Grammar makes the speakers, and writers have good sentences because it depicts about the structure and the rule of the language. The largest unit of grammar is a sentence, and one of the important units in composing a sentence is primary auxiliary verbs. In this brief paper, the writer endeavors to explain about primary auxiliary verbs of English because the primary auxiliary verbs are always used together with the main verbs to give grammatical information, and therefore, it can add extra meaning to a sentence which is not given by the main verbs. Therefore, this paper is written to inform the scholars of the types and the use of primary auxiliary verbs.

The scope of study in this paper includes the definition of auxiliary verb, the types and uses of the primary auxiliary verb. There are four major objectives of this study.

1. To give an adequate information of primary auxiliary verb.
2. To be a reference for the students in learning English grammar.
3. To inform the people all about the primary auxiliary verbs.
4. To enrich students' knowledge with English grammar.

The significance of study is that this paper explains all about the primary auxiliary verbs, and it is assumed that it will give some significance for the readers, such as:

- a. To be a reference for the readers who want to learn about English grammar, especially the primary auxiliary verbs.
- b. To increase the quality of studying English grammar.
- c. To boost add the knowledge with the uses of primary auxiliary verb.

In writing this paper, the writer uses the library research as a method in completing this paper. By reading some books which are related to the topic is an immense contribution to the writer in finishing the work.

Definition of Auxiliary Verb

According to linguistics, an auxiliary verb (also called helping verb) is a verb functioning to give further semantic or syntactic information about the main verb (non-auxiliary verb) following it. In English, every clause consists of a main verb and optionally one or more auxiliary verbs. For examples, 'have written' (one auxiliary verb), and 'have been written' (two auxiliary verbs).

There is a syntactic difference between an auxiliary verb and a main verb; that is, each has a different grammatical function within a sentence. In English, there are some verbs that

can act either as auxiliary or main verb, such as 'be' ("I am writing a letter." vs "I am a postman.") and "have" ("I have a letter." vs "I have written a letter."), In the case of 'be', it is sometimes ambiguous whether it is auxiliary or not; for example, "The ice cream was melted." could mean either "Someone melted the ice cream." In which case, 'melt' would be the main verb or "The ice cream was mostly liquid." In which case, 'be' would be the main verb.

Types of Auxiliary Verbs

All auxiliary verbs are used with a main verb. They have no meaning on their own. They are necessary for the grammatical structure of a sentence. They help the main verb (which has the real meaning). In English, they can be divided into three groups, they are:

1. Primary auxiliary verbs, used mainly to change the tense or voice of the main verb, and in making questions and negatives.
2. Modal auxiliary verbs, used to change the "mood" of the main verb.
3. Semi-modal verbs, these are called "semi-modals" because they are partly like modal auxiliary verbs and partly like main verbs.

Primary Auxiliary Verbs in English

The primary auxiliary verbs are "to be", "to have", "to do". Primary auxiliary verbs are formed by conjugation into different forms: is, am, are, was, were, have, has, had, do, does, did.

The primary auxiliary verbs are used together with a main verb to give the grammatical information and therefore they add an extra meaning to a sentence which is not given by the main

verb. In English, the extra meaning of auxiliary verbs changes the basic form of the main verb to have one or more of the following functions: passive, progressive, negative statements, ask questions, etc.

Types and Uses of Primary Auxiliary Verbs

Some sentences have more than one verb. They have a main verb- the verb that shows the main action or state of being. They also have an auxiliary verb because an auxiliary verb helps people to know when the action of the verb happened in the tense of the verb.

There are three types of primary auxiliary verbs, they are: 'to be', 'to have', and 'to do'. They are irregular verb and can be used as main verbs. The verbs "to be" and "to have" are the most commonly used auxiliary verbs and work alongside the main verbs in any statement.

Primary Auxiliary Verb "Be"

i. Be as a Main Verb

'Be' is the basic form of the verb which is usually used in the forms of is, am, are, was, were. 'Was' and 'were' are the past tense form of 'be'. 'Was' is used for the singular form and 'were' is used for the plural form.

For example: I was at work before 8 o'clock this morning.

You were there much earlier than any of us.

He was planning to take his vacation in December.

You and I are best friends.

As a main verb, be (the copula) is the most important copula verb in English. Every English sentence must have a verb and it is true even for short sentences. In this case, 'be' has functioned as the "main verb" in a sentence not as an auxiliary verb.

These are some functions of 'be' as a main verb, they are:

1. 'Be' is the verb normally used to denote the existence of, or to give information about a person or thing.

For example: Gold is metal.

She is a student.

The dog is in the garden.

The roads were rough and narrow.

He was tall.

2. 'Be' is used to express the physical or mental condition.

For example: He was excited.

I am very sad.

They are unhappy.

3. With certain adjectives, e.g. quite/noisy, good/bad, wise/foolish, it is possible to use the continuous tense form of 'be'. e.g. 'He is being foolish,' to imply that the subject is showing this quality at this time. Similarly, "The children are being quite," means that they are playing quietly now, but "The children are quite," might mean that they usually play quite.

Other adjectives include:

annoying	generous/mean
clever/stupid	helpful/unhelpful
difficult	mysterious
formal	polite
funny	optimistic/pessimistic

With some of those, the continuous form may imply that the subject is deliberately acting in this way:

For example:

'She is just being polite,' probably means that 'She is only pretending to admire you.'

'You are being stupid,' may mean you are not trying to understand.

'He is being funny,' usually means he is only joking.
Don't believe him.

4. 'Be' is used for age,

For example: How old are you? I am 21 years old.

How old is the tower? It is 200 years old.

5. Size and weight are expressed by 'be'.

For example: How tall are you?

What is your weight?

How high are you now?

6. 'Be' is used for prices.

For example: How much is this melon?

How much are these shirts?

ii. Be as an Auxiliary Verb

As an auxiliary verb, 'be' has some grammatical functions, they are:

1. To make Present Continuous (be + present participle) .

The Present Continuous (progressive) Tense is formed by two verbs; BE (is/am/are) and the verb -ING. In present Continuous, 'BE' is an auxiliary verb and it has no meaning, but it must be used in present progressive form.

The Present Progressive describes activities or events in progress at a particular time, usually for a limited amount of time. It describes events that are currently in progress or event that are going to take place in the future and about which the speaker feels quite certain.

• Present Continuous describing an event in progress.

For example: I am looking for an employee.

She is studying English grammar.

• Present Progressive with future time.

For example: She is coming back tomorrow.

I am going with him next week

2. To make passive voice (be + past participle).

Most passive constructions are formed with the auxiliary 'be' and a past participle, but some past participles are irregular verbs. The form of passive: be + past participle

For example: He is appointed as a Head of Department.

The package was mailed by my friend.

We are helped by the teacher.

This class is taught by a new teacher. (Irregular Verb)

3. Be + infinitive

'Be + infinitive' construction is extremely important and can be used in the following ways:

a. To convey orders or instructions.

For example: No one is to leave this building without the permission of the police.

(No one must leave).

He is to stay here till we return. (He must stay).

b. To convey a plan.

For example: She is to be married next month.

The expedition is to start in a week's time.

4. Was/were + infinitive can express an idea of destiny.

For example: They said goodbye, little knowing that they were never to meet again.

(were destined never to meet)

He received a blow on the head. It didn't worry him at the time but it was to be very troublesome later.

5. Be about + infinitive expresses the immediate future.

For example: They are about to start. (They are just going to start. They are on the point of starting).

'Just' can be added to make the future even more immediate.

For example: They are just about to leave.

He was just about to dive when he saw the shark.

'Be' on the point of + verb-ing has the same meaning as 'be about + infinitive' but is a shape more immediate.

For example: They are on the point of buying the tickets.

She is on the point of doing her homework

Primary Auxiliary Verb "Have"

i. Have as a Main Verb

As a transitive (a verb is used with a direct object) main verb, 'have' is also as common as the most common lexical verbs in English. 'Have' is the most common in conversation. There are two types of 'have': 'has' and 'had'. 'Has' is used for the singular form (he, she, it) except for subject 'I' that uses 'have'. 'Had' is used for all subjects in the past form of 'have'. The main verb 'have' can be used with many different meanings, for example:

• Showing physical possession.

For example: One in three of these families has two cars.

I have many story books.

She has many friends.

• Describing eating or drinking.

For example: I have lunch at half past one.

I have dinner at seven o'clock.

• Telling family connections.

For example: She had a husband and child.

I have two beautiful cousins.

• Showing where something exists.

For example: It would be nice to have a young person.

It is nice to have a large house.

• Linking a person to an abstract quality.

For example: I hope she has fun.

I hope you have a good time on your trip.

• **Showing that someone causes something to be done.**

For example: Maybe, you should have it dyed black as well,
He has the watchmaker to service his watch.

In addition, the verb 'have' occurs as part of the semi-modal 'have to' (meaning must).

For example: I will have to blank it out.

ii. Have as an Auxiliary Verb

Forms of the verb 'to have' are used to create tenses known as 'The Present Perfect' and 'Past Perfect'. The Perfect Tenses indicate that something has happened in the past; the Present Perfect indicates that something happened and might be continuing to happen. The Past Perfect indicates that something happened prior to something else happening.

For example: I have written a letter to you. (Present Perfect)

He had left when we arrived. (Past Perfect)

When my brother arrived, I had painted my car.

(Past Perfect)

To have is also in combination with other modal verbs to express probability and possibility in the past.

• As an affirmative statement, 'to have' can express how certain we are that something happened (when combined with an appropriate modal + have + a past participle),

For example: They may have voted already.

My friend might have known about the gifts.

He must have left already.

• As a negative statement, a modal is combined with not+ have + a past participle to express how certain we are that something did not happen.

For example: He might not have known about the gifts.

I may not have been there at the time of the crime.

• To ask about possibility or probability in the past, a modal is combined with the subject + have + past participle,

For example: Could he have known about the gifts?

• For short answer, a modal is combined with have.

For example: Did he know about this? "I don't know. He may have.

'To have' (sometimes combined with to get) is used to express a logical inference.

For example: It has been raining all week; the basement has to be flooded by now.

He hit his head on the doorway. He has got to be over seven feet tall.

Have is often combined with an infinitive to form an auxiliary whose meaning is similar to "must",

For example: I have to have a car like that!!

She has to pay her own tuition at college.

Primary Auxiliary Verb "Do".

i. Do as a Main Verb

'Do' is usually used in the form of 'do, does, did'. 'Do' is used for I, we, you, and they subject. 'Does' is used for the third person singular (he, she, it) and 'did' is used for all subject in the past form of 'do'.

For example: You work everyday, don't you?

I do not study English everyday.

Doesn't he speak English everyday?

Did he go there last week?

'Do' is also functioned as a main verb in transitive. As a main verb in transitive (a verb is used with direct object) constructions, do has an activity meaning. It can take a direct object.

For example: In that moment, he did a wonderful thing.

However, 'do' more commonly combine with a noun phrase to form idiomatic expressions such as do the job, do the dishes, do some work, do the wash, do your hair.

For example: It does the job. It's not a bad little thing.

I am used to it. I do the dishes every day.

1. Main verb 'do' as a transitive pro-verb

'Do' is also commonly functions as a pro-verb. Pro-verb 'do' is especially common in conversation. It often combines with it, this/that, or so.

For example: I didn't do it.

Well, that's why he did it.

That really hurts my ear when you do that.

2. Main verb 'do' as an intransitive pro-verb

In conversation, after an auxiliary verb, do as an intransitive (a verb is used without a direct object) pro-verb provides an alternative to ellipsis.

For example: A: No, no signs of him resigning.

B: Well, kicked him out.

A: They should have done, but they won't. (done = kicked him out)

ii. 'Do' as an Auxiliary Verb

As an auxiliary verb, do has some grammatical functions, they are:

1. 'Do' may be functioned as an auxiliary to express the negative and to ask questions in the Simple Present Tense. (Does, however, is substituted for the third person, singular subject in the present tense. The Past Tense 'did' works with all persons, singular and plural).

For example: I don't study at night.

She doesn't work here anymore.

Does she work here?

Do you attend this class?

2. These verbs also work as "short answers" with the main verb omitted.

For example: Does she work here? No, she doesn't.

Do you like me? Yes, I do.

3. Forms of 'do' are useful in expressing similarity and differences in conjunction with 'so' and 'neither'.

For example: He drives faster than I do.

My wife hates spinach and so does my son.

My wife doesn't like spinach, neither do I.

4. 'Do' is also helpful because it means you don't have to repeat the verb.

For example: My friend excelled in language studies; so did his brother.

My friend studies as hard as her sister does.

5. Emphatic 'Do'

'Emphatic do' occurs as an auxiliary verb in a clause that is not negated and is not question. It is used to emphasize that the meaning of the main verb is positive. 'Emphatic do' has many uses in English, they are:

- a. To add emphasis to an entire sentence.

For example: "He does like spinach. He really does!"

- b. To add emphasis to an imperative

For example: "Do come in. (actually softens the command)

- c. To add emphasis to a frequency adverb.

For example: He never did understand his father.

She always does manage to hurt her mother's feeling.

d. To contradict a negative statement

For example: "You didn't do your homework, did you? Oh, but I did finish it."

e. To ask clarifying question about a previous negative statement.

For example: "I didn't take the tools. Then, who did take the tools?"

f. To indicate a strong concession

For example: "Although Michael denied any wrong-doing, they did return some of the gifts."

6. Auxiliary 'do' as a pro-verb

Like main verb 'do', auxiliary verb 'do' can act as a pro-verb. It is used in both positive and negative clauses.

For example: He doesn't even know you. He does!

I think his mom wants him to come back but his dad doesn't.

7. Auxiliary 'do' in question tags.

'Do' has also function as auxiliary in question tags.

For example: But, she looked after you, didn't she?

This delay solves nothing, does it?

He lives here, doesn't he?

He loved you, didn't he?

This construction is obviously related to do that expresses negatives and ask questions. It occurs where the preceding main verb (underlined above) has no auxiliary.

8. Do + imperative makes a request or invitation more persuasive.

For example: Do come with us. (more persuasive than come with us)

Do help me, please.

Do work a little harder.

9. It can similarly be used as an approving or encouraging affirmative answer to someone asking for approval of or permission to do some action.

For example: "Shall I write to him? Yes, 'do' or 'do' alone."

Having explained about the primary auxiliary verbs in accordance with opinions of some English grammarians, it is possible to take the conclusion that there are some major points of primary auxiliary verb, they are:

➤ There are three kinds of auxiliary verbs, they are:

a. Primary auxiliary verbs (do, have, be).

b. Modal auxiliary verbs (shall, should, will, would, may, might, ought to, can, could)

c. Semi-modal verbs (need, dare, used to)

➤ The three primary verbs - do, have, be- can serve as both main verb and auxiliary verbs. They differ, however, in their specific main and auxiliary functions.

Be

• As a copula (main verb), be is the most common copular verb in English.

• As an auxiliary verb, be marks progressive aspect and passive voice.

Have

• As a main verb, have is one of the most common lexical verbs in English.

• As an auxiliary verb, have marks perfect aspect.

Do

• As a main verb, do is a general transitive verb of action (e.g. do some works).

• As a main verb, do can also function as a transitive pro-verb (do it, do that).

- As an auxiliary verb, 'do' is used in the construction for forming negation and questions (e.g. Didn't you know?).
- Auxiliary 'do' is also used for emphatic meaning (e.g. Oh! do shut up!)

In writing this paper, the writer wants to offer these following suggestions in order to understand further about the types and functions of primary auxiliary verb.

1. In order to know more about the types and functions of primary auxiliary verbs for those who are studying English.
2. This paper could hopefully be a reference to know more about primary auxiliary verbs as well as its functions.
3. Readers should be encouraged to read English books so that they become more familiar with primary auxiliary verb.

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