

## INTRODUCTION

The content of the Athabasca University Mobile ESL project is derived from James O'Driscoll's *Penguin Basic English Grammar* book. It is used with the author's permission.

The book has:

- 86 units of English grammar. Most units are one page long. In each unit, the writing in black tells you about the grammar, and the writing in **blue** gives you examples.
- 13 appendices after the units. They give detailed information about things such as spelling and punctuation.
- an index in alphabetical order.

### ***This book's content can help you:***

- to write and speak English correctly
- if you do not know much English
- it can also help you if you know quite a lot. The answer to an 'advanced' problem of grammar is often very basic.

### ***Using the units:***

Each unit tells you about a small part of English grammar. There is a short introduction at the beginning of each unit, but the most important thing is the examples.

You will often find references in brackets in the units. For example:

Noun Phrase (Unit 45.3)

This means that you can turn to Unit 45, part 3, if you need to find out more about noun phrases.

You will often find **NOTICE** in the units. This means there is something here you should be careful about.

## Useful words:

To understand grammar, it helps you to understand a few special ‘grammar’ words. You can find the meanings of most of these words in the units, but it will help you if you understand the words below.

AFFIRMATIVE	the opposite of negative. For example, <b>He likes coffee</b> is affirmative, but <b>He does not like coffee</b> is negative.
CLAUSE	examples of clauses are: <b>that he has gone</b> in I know <b>that he has gone</b> <b>when I see him</b> in I’ll tell him <b>when I see him</b> <b>because it’s cold</b> in Let’s stay in <b>because it’s cold</b> Clauses have subjects and verbs (Unit 1), but they cannot make a sentence alone.
FORM	the exact shape of a word. For example, many adverbs (Unit 64) end with <b>-ly</b> (for example, <b>largely</b> ), so we can say that many adverbs have an <b>-ly</b> form. Some words have only one form. For example, the only form of <b>the</b> (Unit 52) is <b>the</b> ; it never changes. But all verbs and many other words have more than one form. For example, the verb <b>go</b> has five forms ( <b>go, goes, going, went, gone</b> ).
FORMATION	one verb or two verbs or three verbs together in a sentence. For example, Present Continuous (Unit 22) is a verb formation.
NEGATIVE	the opposite of affirmative. A negative sentence has the word <b>not</b> ( <b>n’t</b> ) in it. For example, <b>He does not like coffee</b> .
PREPOSITION	examples of prepositions are: <b>at, in on, under, and with</b> . They go before noun phrases (Unit 45.3). They can help to say ‘where’ (Units 44-79) or ‘when’ (Unit 72).
QUESTION	a sentence (Unit 1) which asks for information. For example, <b>Does he like coffee?</b>
STATEMENT	a sentence (Unit 1) which gives information. <b>He likes coffee</b> and <b>He does not like coffee</b> are both statements.
TENSE	a verb form which tells us something about time. In English there are two tenses: <b>present</b> (shown by the base form or s form – Unit 14) and <b>past</b> (shown by past form – Unit 14). The verb of a sentence (Unit 3) always has tense: the first word of the verb tells us if it is

present or past. For example, **I have been working** is present because **have** is base form.

Note: **TENSE** is not the same thing as time. **TENSE** is a grammar word. Time is not.

## **VERB**

we use this word for two meanings:

1. A type of word (like noun (Unit 45) or preposition).  
Examples are **do, have, run, believe, learn**.
2. A part of the sentence (like subject (Unit 1) or clause (Unit 1)). For example, in **I have been working very hard** the verb is **have been working**.