

# Conjugaison anglaise

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Il faut d'abord distinguer les notions de **temps grammatical** (en anglais *tense*, les temps tels qu'en français le « passé simple » ou le « plus-que-parfait ») et de **temps extra-linguistique** (en anglais *time*, les notions de « passé », de « présent » et de « futur ».)

Il est admis que l'anglais ne possède à proprement parler que deux temps grammaticaux (*tenses*) : le *present* et le *preterit* ou *past tense*<sup>[1], [2]</sup>. Toutes les autres formes sont des modalités ou des aspects :

- l'aspect HAVE + -EN (où -EN symbolise le participe passé<sup>[3]</sup>)
- et l'aspect BE + -ING (où -ING symbolise le participe présent).

Cette page se propose de détailler dans un premier temps les **formes** des conjugaisons anglaises, et dans un second temps leurs **utilisations**, plus complexes.

Pour éviter la confusion entre les terminologies du français et de l'anglais les noms anglais seront conservés.

Les termes « progressif » et « continu », qui appartiennent à la grammaire traditionnelle, sont maintenus car connus du plus grand nombre.

## Formes

### Le Participe présent (-ING)

Le *participe présent* est construit en ajoutant au verbe le suffixe *-ing*: *go* → *going*.

- Si la base verbale se termine par un *e* muet, ce *e* est supprimé : *believe* → *believing*.
- Dans le cas contraire il est conservé : *agree* → *agreeing*.
- Si la base se termine par *-ie*, le *ie* devient *y* avant *-ing* : *lie* → *lying*.
- Si :
  - la base se termine par une consonne seule ;
  - **et si** une voyelle seule précède cette consonne ;
  - **et si** la dernière syllabe du verbe est accentuée

alors la consonne finale est redoublée avant l'ajout du suffixe : *set* → *setting*; *occur* → *occurring*, ceci pour ne pas modifier la prononciation de la voyelle.

En anglais britannique, par exception à la règle ci-dessus, le <l> final est redoublé même si la dernière syllabe est accentuée : *yodel* → *yodelling*, *travel* → *travelling*; en anglais américain cette exception n'existe pas : *yodeling*, *traveling*. De même pour *focus* → *focussing* (anglais américain *focusing*).

### Formes irrégulières :

- *singeing* (*singe*, roussir), où le *e* est (parfois) conservé pour éviter la confusion avec *singing* (*sing*, chanter) ;
  - *ageing*, en anglais britannique, la forme attendue *aging* étant ambiguë quant à sa prononciation : *g* dur ou mou ;
  - Les mots terminés par *-c* s'adjoignent un *k* avant le suffixe *-ing*, par exemple *panicking*, *frolicking*, et *bivouacking*.
  - Un certain nombre de verbes sont soumis à la règle du redoublement alors qu'ils ne se qualifient pas entièrement, ainsi *diagramming*, *kidnapping*, *programming*, et
-

worshipping.

## Le Participe passé (-EN)<sup>[3]</sup>

Pour les **verbes réguliers** (ou « faibles »), le *participe passé* se forme avec le suffixe *-ed*:  
*work* → *worked*.

- Si la base se termine en *e*, on ajoute simplement *-d* : *tune* → *tuned* ; *dye* → *dyed*.
- Si la base se termine par une consonne + *y*, le *y* devient *i* devant le *-ed* : *deny* → *denied*,  
*ally* → *allied*.
- Si la base se termine par une voyelle + *y*, le *y* est conservé : *alloy* → *alloyed*, *play* →  
*played*.
- La règle de redoublement de la consonne finale est la même pour le preterit que pour le  
participe présent : voir ci-dessus.

Les **verbes irréguliers** peuvent avoir des formes différentes pour le preterit et le participe  
passé : *to eat*, *I ate*, *I have eaten*. Pour la liste complète des verbes irréguliers anglais voir :  
*Wiktionary appendix: Irregular English verbs*.

Par convention on représente le preterit par *-ED* et le participe passé par *-EN* pour les  
distinguer dans les **verbes irréguliers** comme *eat* / *ate* / *eaten*. Toutefois ces deux formes,  
*-ED* et *-EN*, sont identiques pour tous les **verbes réguliers**.

## Le Present

### Le Simple present

Le *simple present* se forme en ajoutant, pour la **3<sup>e</sup> personne du singulier**, la désinence  
<**S**> à la base verbale. Toutes les autres formes sont invariables. Pour certains verbes  
existent des irrégularités orthographiques.

To play	To think
I play	I think
You play	You think
He, she, it, one plays	He, she, it, one thinks
We play	We think
You play	You think
They play	They think

### Have et Be

Les verbes *have* et *be* ont des conjugaisons irrégulières au présent. On retrouve pourtant le  
*-s* de la troisième personne dans l'un et l'autre.

To have	To be
I have	I am
You have	You are
He, she, it, one <b>has</b>	He, she, it, one <b>is</b>
We have	We are
You have	You are

They have	They are
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**Le Present progressive (continuous) : aspect [BE +ING]**

Pour tous les verbes, le *present progressive* se conjugue suivant la formule : auxiliaire *be* conjugué au présent + verbe en -ING

To play	To think
I <b>am</b> playing	I <b>am</b> thinking
You <b>are</b> playing	You <b>are</b> thinking
He, she, it, one <b>is</b> playing	He, she, it, one <b>is</b> thinking
We <b>are</b> playing	We <b>are</b> thinking
You <b>are</b> playing	You <b>are</b> thinking
They <b>are</b> playing	They <b>are</b> thinking

**Le Present perfect simple : aspect [HAVE +EN]<sup>[3]</sup>**

Pour tous les verbes, le *present perfect* se conjugue suivant la formule : auxiliaire *have* conjugué au présent + verbe en -EN (participe passé)

To play	To think
I <b>have</b> played	I <b>have</b> thought
You <b>have</b> played	You <b>have</b> thought
He, she, it, one <b>has</b> played	He, she, it, one <b>has</b> thought
We <b>have</b> played	We <b>have</b> thought
You <b>have</b> played	You <b>have</b> thought
They <b>have</b> played	They <b>have</b> thought

**Le Present perfect progressive (continuous) : aspect [HAVE +EN]<sup>[3]</sup> +aspect [BE +ING]**

Les aspects [HAVE + EN] et [BE + ING] peuvent se combiner. L'emboîtement se fait de la façon suivante


**A NOTER :**

Le present perfect+ ing s'utilise pour cette question:

What have you been doing? *Qu'as tu fait? Comment as-tu occupé ton temps?*

Or What have you done? *Qu'as tu fait? Montre moi ton travail!*

aspect		BE	-ING
+ aspect	HAVE (au présent)	-EN	
=	HAVE (au présent)	<b>been</b>	-ING
I	have	been	running
Celia	has	been	working a lot
They	have	been	watching me

 À noter que l'emboîtement des deux aspects **ne se fait jamais en sens inverse**

aspect		HAVE	-EN	
+ aspect	BE (au présent)	-ING		
=	BE (au présent)	<b>having</b>	-EN	
* I	am	having	broken	<b>X</b> Non

## Le Past (ou preterit)

### Le Simple past

Pour les verbes *réguliers* (ou « faibles »), le *simple past* a la même forme que le participe passé (voir ci-dessus) : *work* → I **worked**. Les verbes *irréguliers* peuvent avoir des formes différentes pour le preterit et le participe passé: *to eat*, I **ate**, I *have eaten*. Pour la liste complète des verbes irréguliers voir: *Wiktionary appendix: Irregular English verbs*.

To play	To think
I played	I <b>thought</b>
You played	You <b>thought</b>
He, she, it, one played	He, she, it, one <b>thought</b>
We played	We <b>thought</b>
You played	You <b>thought</b>
They played	They <b>thought</b>

### Have et Be

Les verbes *have* et *be* ont des conjugaisons irrégulières au *past tense*.

To have	To be
I had	I was
You had	You were
He, she, it, one had	He, she, it, one was
We had	We were
You had	You were
They had	They were

### Le Past progressive (continuous) : aspect [BE +ING]

Pour tous les verbes, le *past progressive* se conjugue suivant la formule : auxiliaire *be* conjugué au *past tense* + verbe en -ING

To play	To think
I <b>was</b> playing	I <b>was</b> thinking
You <b>were</b> playing	You <b>were</b> thinking
He, she, it, one <b>was</b> playing	He, she, it, one <b>was</b> thinking
We <b>were</b> playing	We <b>were</b> thinking
You <b>were</b> playing	You <b>were</b> thinking

They <b>were playing</b>	They <b>were thinking</b>
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**Le Past perfect simple : aspect [HAVE +EN]<sup>[3]</sup>**

Cette forme est parfois appelée aussi *pluperfect*.

Pour tous les verbes, le *past perfect* se construit suivant la formule : auxiliaire *have* conjugué au *past tense* + verbe en -EN (participe passé)<sup>[3]</sup>

To play	To think
I <b>had played</b>	I <b>had thought</b>
You <b>had played</b>	You <b>had thought</b>
He, she, it, one <b>had played</b>	He, she, it, one <b>had thought</b>
We <b>had played</b>	We <b>had thought</b>
You <b>had played</b>	You <b>had thought</b>
They <b>had played</b>	They <b>had thought</b>

**Le Past perfect progressive (continuous) : aspect [HAVE +EN]<sup>[3]</sup> +aspect [BE + ING]**

Comme au présent les aspects [HAVE + EN]<sup>[3]</sup> et [BE + ING] peuvent se combiner: voir *present perfect progressive* ci-dessus.

I had been running.
Celia had been working a lot.
They had been watching me.

**La notion de futur**

Il existe plusieurs façons d'exprimer le futur en anglais.

**Will et shall**

sujet + *will* + verbe

- We will spend the winter in Benidorm
- Will he write?

sujet + *shall* + verbe.

- He shall come, whether he likes it or not.
- We shall overcome.

**Be going to**

be (conjugué) + going to + base verbale

- *I'm going to get married.*
- *I think it's going to rain.*
- *I was going to say ...*

**Be about**

be (conjugué) + about to + base verbale

Cette structure s'utilise pour évoquer un futur imminent.

- *We are about to land at Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle airport*

**Futur +aspect [BE +ING]**

will be + verbe en -ING

- He will be writing
- He will not / won't be writing
- Will he be writing?

**Futur +aspect [HAVE +EN]<sup>[3]</sup>**

will have + verbe en -EN (participe passé)

- He will have written
- I will have finished my essay by Thursday.
- By then she will have been there for three weeks.
- Will he have written?

**Futur +aspect [BE +ING] +aspect [HAVE +EN]<sup>[3]</sup>**

ou *future perfect continuous*.

- He will have been writing
- He will not / won't have been writing
- Will he have been writing?

**Le Présent**

En anglais, on utilise souvent le présent simple pour exprimer le futur quand il y a un complément circonstanciel de temps dans la phrase. C'est particulièrement le cas lorsqu'on évoque un futur planifié et dont la réalisation est quasi-certaine (horaires de transports notamment):

- *The train leaves at 4:16pm.*

## Emploi

### Le Participe présent (ING)

- le participe présent est un nom verbal: **writing**: écrire / l'écriture; **swimming**: nager / la natation. Il peut être sujet ou complément et peut être qualifié par un nom ou un adjectif:
  - **Diving** can be dangerous;
  - off-piste **skiing** is forbidden;
  - the reason for my **coming** here today ...
- il est utilisé comme adjectif à sens actif: a **stimulating** proposition; an **English-speaking** guide; grammar is **boring**.
- il est utilisé pour former l'aspect BE + ING et peut se combiner à l'aspect HAVE + EN:
  - He is **writing** another book about beavers.
  - I have been **writing** all afternoon.

### Le Participe passé (EN)<sup>[3]</sup>

- le participe passé peut servir d'adjectif à sens passif: the **fallen** angel; a **broken** leg; a **damaged** reputation.
- le participe passé s'emploie avec l'auxiliaire *have* pour former l'aspect HAVE + EN: They **have written**.
- avec l'auxiliaire *be*, le participe passé forme le passif: A *Midsummer Night's Dream* **was written** by Shakespeare.

### L'aspect BE + ING

En utilisant l'aspect BE + -ING, l'énonciateur réalise un effet de **mise en scène**. L'événement est **perçu dans son déroulement**, comme sur une scène de théâtre, ou bien est **souligné et commenté** par l'énonciateur pour marquer désapprobation, agacement, etc.

- *They are having breakfast*. On focalise sur la scène en déroulement, le décor est posé. Glose: "En ce moment, sous nos yeux, ils prennent leur petit déjeuner."
- *She was waiting for the bus when the rain started*. La première partie de la proposition donne un cadre scénique au sein duquel un événement s'est produit. Glose: "Alors qu'elle attendait son bus, soudain la pluie se mit à tomber."
- *He is always complaining about the noise*. L'événement est habituel; il ne se déroule pas sous les yeux des interlocuteurs, mais il est mis en scène avec une force d'évocation qui le rend immédiatement perceptible. Glose: "Il passe son temps à se plaindre du bruit, cela en devient pénible."

## L'aspect HAVE +EN<sup>[3]</sup>

En utilisant l'aspect HAVE -EN (*present perfect, past perfect*) l'énonciateur s'intéresse au **résultat** d'un procès (= d'une action, d'un évènement) par rapport au moment d'énonciation (le présent avec le *present perfect*, le passé avec le *past perfect*).

- *I've lost my glasses* : j'ai perdu mes lunettes = je ne les ai pas, je ne peux pas lire etc.

On parle souvent de **bilan** à propos de l'aspect HAVE -EN:

- *I've been to New York, I've never been to Japan.*

## Le Present

### Simple present et Progressive (Continuous) present

Les grammaires de l'anglais décrivent souvent le présent simple comme le temps de l'activité « habituelle », de la description d'un « état », de « vérités générales », des « propriétés d'un objet », ou de l'expression d'un jugement, etc., tandis que le présent progressif permet de présenter une action « en cours au moment où on parle »<sup>[4]</sup>.

Cette explication rend bien compte d'un certain nombre de cas:

- *The Earth **revolves** around the sun, I **work** on Saturdays, It often **snows** in January* illustrent l'emploi du présent simple,
- *What are you reading, Look, it's snowing, ou "Be quiet, I'm working"* illustrent l'emploi du présent progressif.

### Le Present perfect : aspect HAVE +EN

Le présent perfect permet de faire le bilan d'une situation dans le présent. Il permet de présenter le résultat présent d'une action.

Par exemple: *I have found* a job. I feel relieved.

Il permet d'expliquer la situation présente. On trouve souvent un lien de cause à conséquence entre un énoncé au présent et un énoncé au present perfect.

Par exemple: *Things are* much better now. The situation *has improved*.

## Le Past (ou preterit)

### Le Simple past

Le **simple past** (ou **simple preterit**) correspond à deux valeurs : un décalage sur le plan temporel (le passé) ou un « décrochage modal » (le « preterit modal » qui concerne l'hypothétique, l'irréel, l'imaginaire...)

**Le passé:** le past tense est employé dès lors que la relation prédicative est située dans le passé, soit par un adverbe de temps, un complément de temps, ou, en l'absence de toute marque temporelle, par le contexte.

- *He **went** to Paris yesterday.*
- *I **lived** in Toronto from 1992 to 1997.*
- *Napoleon **died** at St Helena.*
- *I **was** born in Scotland.*
- *Where **did** you **buy** your car?*

Les deux premières phrases indiquent explicitement un contexte passé. Les deux suivantes supposent clairement un contexte passé (mort de Napoléon, naissance de l'énonciateur).



Dans la dernière on utilise un **past tense** comme à chaque fois que l'on s'intéresse aux **conditions dans lesquelles s'est déroulé le procès** (ici, « où »).

Cette valeur du simple past correspond en français au **passé simple** (langue écrite littéraire) ou au **passé composé** (langue « ordinaire »). ⚠ Il est fréquent que les francophones utilisent un **present perfect** à la place du **past tense** par calque du français:

- il est arrivé hier : he has arrived yesterday ✗ Non
- il est arrivé hier : he **arrived** yesterday ✓ Oui

Il faut se souvenir qu'un contexte passé entraîne obligatoirement l'emploi du past tense.

Le simple past peut aussi correspondre à l'**imparfait** français dans les cas suivants:

- le verbe décrit un **état**, une **caractéristique** (révolus) du sujet:
  - *Mozart **was** a genius.*
  - *Mrs Morland **was** a very good woman.* (Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey)
  - *He **looked** very tired.*
  - *René Dumont always **wore** red pullovers.*
- on a affaire à une **description**
  - *The moon **hung** low in the sky like a yellow skull.* (Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray)
  - *The road **ran** west through low, scorched hills ...* (Peter Matthiessen, On the River Styx)
- on se place dans une **perspective historique**
  - *On May 10, Churchill **was** appointed Prime Minister.*
- une **itération** (répétition) est impliquée par le contexte
  - *Seeing her always **made** me feel like I was catching a rarity.* (John Fowles, The Collector)

Le **preterit modal** Le **past tense** ou preterit sert aussi à exprimer l'hypothétique, le souhaitable, bref toute situation qui n'est pas la réalité:

- *If I **knew**, I would answer.* (but I *don't* know)
- *I wish you **were** more careful in the future.* (you are *not*, or have not been, careful)
- *I'd rather he **wouldn't** come* (but I'm afraid he *will* come)
- *Suppose we **had** a million dollars...* (however we *don't* have a million dollars)

Dans cette utilisation le preterit correspond en français à l'**imparfait** (« si j'**étais** riche... ») ou au **subjonctif** (« j'aimerais que vous **fassiez**... »)

**Le *Progressive (Continuous) past* : aspect BE +ING)**

- *He was reading these words for the second time, when the front-door bell rang...* (P.G. Wodehouse, *Mulliner Nights*)

**Le *Past perfect* : aspect HAVE +EN****Notion de futur****Will et Shall**

Les auxiliaires de modalité **will** et **shall** renvoient au domaine du **probable**. Le futur n'étant jamais certain, on voit comment will et shall peuvent être employés pour l'exprimer.

Will indique que la relation sujet - prédicat (ou sujet - groupe verbal) a toutes les chances de se réaliser.

Avec shall la relation sujet - prédicat ne semble pas aller de soi à priori: l'énonciateur doit donc l'imposer.

**Références**

- Jean-Claude Souesme, *Grammaire anglaise en contexte*, Ophrys, 1992.
- Henri Adamczewski et Jean-Pierre Gabilan, *Les Clés de la grammaire anglaise*, Armand Colin, 1992.

**Notes**

[1] Jean-Claude Souesme 1992

[2] Henri Adamczewski et Jean-Pierre Gabilan 1992

[3] Par convention les linguistes représentent le participe passé par le symbole EN (comme dans eat - ate - **eaten**) pour le distinguer du prétérit, symbolisé par ED

[4] Voir par exemple *Pratique de l'anglais de A à Z* (Hatier) ou *Grammaire de l'anglais*, Le Robert et Nathan, Nathan 1996.

**Voir aussi****Articles connexes**

- Grammaire anglaise

**Liens externes**

- Collection audio libre: Les verbes irréguliers anglais (<http://shtooka.net/collections/eng/verbs/fr/>)
- Conjugueur anglais - Conjugaison des verbes anglais et morphologie (<http://www.scientificpsychic.com/verbs1fr.html>)
- The Conjugator - Un site dédié à la conjugaison anglaise (<http://www.theconjugator.com/>)
- [ilearnenglish.fr](http://www.ilearnenglish.fr) - Un site dédié à la grammaire anglaise - Des exercices et leçons sur les temps (<http://www.ilearnenglish.fr/Parcoursliberte-grammaire.html>)

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