



'To be' or not 'to be': verbs

CAPS Statement

Language structures and conventions

Working with words and sentences: Uses forms of the verb 'to be', e.g. be/been/being; am/ is/ are; was/ were

Note

'To be' verbs are not action verbs; they are **being** verbs. These verbs are short words that sometimes help action words, but in this case they stand alone to be the verb: they show tense.

Which 'to be' verbs do we use?

Example

Present tense

I **am** here.

He / She / It **is** here.

We / You **are** here.

Past tense

I / he / she / it **was** here.

We/You **were** here.

Using be/been/being.

Example

The verb '**be**' has to have a modal verb before it: He must **be** so happy.

The verb '**been**' has to have '**has**', '**have**' or '**had**' before it: He has **been** so happy.

The verb '**being**' has to have one of the other '**to be**' verbs before it: She is **being** silly.

Teacher Tip

can	could	may	might	will
would	must	shall	should	ought to

Make up different sentences with each modal verb preceding 'be'. The next lesson focuses on the present perfect tense: 'has / have been' will be discussed in greater detail.



Activity 1

Help Themba fill in the correct form of the verb 'to be' to complete these sentences. Use each verb only once. The first one has been done for you.

be	been	being	am	are
was		were	is	

- ① I am being quiet!
- ② Shandre _____ good at sports.
- ③ They _____ very careful when they did the science experiment.
- ④ It has _____ cold lately.
- ⑤ The children _____ tired.
- ⑥ The baby _____ awake for a long time last night.
- ⑦ You should _____ happy about your test results.

Activity 2

Fill in the missing 'to be' verbs in this sms message that Themba sends his friend.



Hi. Where _____ you? I _____ here – usual meeting place. The others _____ here, but they've left already. Have you _____ delayed? Our meeting time _____ @ 3pm. It _____ now half past... Should I _____ worried? Let me know asap. T

Hi. Where _____ you? I _____ here at the usual meeting place. The others _____ here, but they have left already. Have you _____ delayed? Our meeting time _____ at 3pm. It _____ now half past. Should I _____ worried? Let me know asap. T

