
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Grammar

Verb patterns



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Finn

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

Catherine

And me, Catherine. Hello.

Finn

In today's programme we're talking about three different verb patterns. First, what exactly do we mean by verb patterns, Catherine?

Catherine

Well, here we mean the various language patterns that follow the main verb in a clause or sentence. And the first pattern we're looking at is verbs which are followed by **that**. Here's our first example:

Example

My doctor **explained that** I had to go to hospital.

Catherine

My doctor **explained that** I had to go to hospital. So, we have a verb – **explain**, plus **that**, and did you notice that the word **that** is followed by an independent clause? In other words, a group of words with a subject and verb, just like like a full sentence. In our example the independent clause was: **I had to go to hospital**. Now, other verbs that take this pattern include **say**, **warn**, **explain**, **suggest** and **know**.

Finn

Right. The second pattern is verbs that are followed by the **-ing** form of another verb. Let's have an example.

Example

We **discussed waiting** until next year.

Catherine

Now, lots of verbs take this pattern, including **advise**, **try**, **love**, **like**, and **hate**. And the third pattern is verbs that are followed by the **infinitive with to**.

Example

He **offered to see** me again in a month's time.

Finn

And verbs that take this pattern include **want**, **need**, **hope**, **love** and **promise**. But it's important to know that with some verbs, you can choose between two of the patterns.

Catherine

You can. So with the verbs **suggest** and **recommend** you can choose between **that plus a clause** or an **-ing** form. Here's an example:

Example

We **suggest that** you go to the hospital in Oxford.

Catherine

Or:

Example

We **suggest going** to the hospital in Oxford.

Finn

And with the verbs **ask**, **propose** and **promise**, you can choose between either **that plus a clause**, or the **infinitive with to**. Another example:

Example

I **promised that** I would let him know my decision.

Catherine

Or:

Example

I **promised to let** him know my decision.

Finn

A good grammar book will give you a full list of verbs that take more than one pattern. Make sure you keep one handy!

Catherine

Top tip. Now, another point is that some of these verbs can take an object before the **infinitive with to**. The verb **ask** is a good example. Listen to this:

Example

I **asked the doctor to change** my medication.

IDENT

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Finn

And we're looking at verb patterns. Well, we've said that some verbs can have an object before the **infinitive with to**. But there are a few verbs that must **always** have an object before the **infinitive with to**. The verbs **advise**, **invite**, **tell** and **warn** are like this.

Example

He **advised me to think** carefully about it. He **told me not to** hurry.

Catherine

Right. Actually that last example is an interesting one. It shows that when you use a negative form with the infinitive, the word **not** goes before, not after, the infinitive with **to** – He **told me not to hurry**.

Finn

Good point. The verbs **advise**, **ask** and **warn** are like that too, aren't they? He **advised me not to worry**, for example.

Catherine

Yes, that's right. Of course, you can use **not** before **-ing** forms as well. Listen to this:

Example

They **recommend not eating** a big meal in the evening.

Finn

But infinitives are a bit different because you lose the word **to** in the negative. So it's possible to say:

Example

They **recommend that you not eat** a big meal in the evening.

Finn

But that sounds very formal. We usually use **don't** instead of **not**.

Example

They **recommend that you don't eat** a big meal in the evening.

Catherine

OK, by now you have probably noticed that most of the verbs we are talking about belong to a particular type.

Finn

Exactly. They are mostly verbs that explain, suggest, advise, offer, promise, report or warn.

Catherine

Try to look out for these verbs and you'll soon get to know which patterns you need to use.

Finn

And now: it's quiz time! Which sentence is correct? a) Carl explained me he would be late home. b) Carl explained that he would be late home.

Catherine

b) is correct. Carl explained that he would be late home. Number 2. Which is correct? a) Which day do you advise us to come? b) Which day do you advise that we come?

Finn

Aha. Both a) and b) are correct!

Catherine

Aha, yes.

Finn

Which day do you advise us to come? and Which day do you advise that we come? Number three. a) She warned me not to go out. b) She warned me not going out.

Catherine

And a) is correct. She warned me not to go out.

Finn

And that is the end of the quiz. Congratulations if you got them all right.

Catherine

Congratulations indeed. So that's all for now about verb patterns, but there's more about this on our website at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

Both

Bye!