



Be Aware

an English Language Learning Course by Mark White
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Lesson Six: The Next State

This **Be Aware** lesson is based on the Real Conversation: *The Next State*. It can be found at the following URL:

<http://englishconversations.org/courses/be-aware/be-aware-lesson-6/>

[Download audio file \(connecticut.mp3\)](#) Note: Right click the link above and choose “save as” to download the audio file.

[Section A: Grammar Explanations with Examples](#)

[Section B: Listening Activities](#)- Make sure you do these BEFORE reading the transcript.

Section A - Grammar Explanations with Examples

Sometimes when you are listening to something in English, you can understand it but you cannot say it. You are not able to reproduce what you hear with correct grammar. It is important to be aware of grammar and the correct way to use words. It helps you to communicate more clearly. This saves time and prevents misunderstandings.

Let’s look at some examples:

Narratives in the Past Simple Tense

Here is a sequence of verbs in the past simple tense. Note that one of them is passive. Which one is it?

was born
moved to
moved to
moved to
grew up in
went to school in
went to college in
studied

The one with the “be” verb is [passive](#). “Was born” is passive. Did you get that? If you have trouble understanding the passive, go to the “[Banjo Player’s Brother](#)” post and click the links. Read the explanatory notes and you will understand. There are many examples of passive. Passive and active are contrasted.

Using the past tense is vital in English. Some languages ([Chinese](#), Thai, Lao, [Cambodian](#), Indonesian, [Malaysian](#), [Vietnamese](#)) have no [past tense](#). It is possible to tell a story in the present tense.

It is also possible to tell a story in [the present tense](#) in English. However it is more normal to tell a story in the [past tense](#). The important thing is not to confuse past and present. Do not mix them up.

Time is a basic idea in English. Time is expressed in each sentence through verb tenses. All verbs have tenses. Everything we say has a time.

If you mess with the idea of time, you will confuse people. You will not be able to get your meaning across. It is important not to mess with the idea of time. It is important to be able to express time in the normal way. Everybody has to agree on the time.

How can you learn to do this? You can learn it by practicing. Look at the list of verbs again.

was born
moved to
moved to
moved to
grew up in
went to school in
went to college in
studied
Now say this aloud very quickly.
is born
was born
move
[moved](#)
move
moved
move
moved
grow up in
grew up in
go to school in
went to school in
go to college in
went to college in
study
studied

Learning by Rote or Singing?

Some people say that learning by rote is old fashioned and ineffective but you can do it in conjunction with other things. Sing the words. Let them roll off your tongue. Think of it as a physical exercise to make your organs of speech stronger. Learn to enunciate these words and phrases really quickly and clearly and strongly. [Sing!](#)

The verb “to move”

Note that the word [“move”](#) occurs three times in the little narrative above. There is a reason for this. It is a very common word. Get it right. Be sure that you know how to use it.

There are two different ways to use it:

I moved to Mt Isa. (intransitive)
I moved the car. (transitive)

Look up the words “transitive” and “intransitive” in the dictionary and be absolutely sure that you understand their meanings. They are vital concepts. Basically a transitive verb needs an object. An intransitive one does not.

I moved the car. (has an object)
I moved to Mt Isa. (does not have an object)

Forming a Narrative

In your head form a narrative using those phrases with “move” etc and giving the story of your start in life. Here is mine:

I was born in Brisbane.
I moved to Blackall.
Then I moved to Mt Isa.
Then I moved back to Brisbane again.
I grew up in Blackall and Mt Isa and Brisbane.
I went to school in Blackall and Mt Isa and Brisbane.
I went to university in Brisbane.
I studied history and languages.

Get the same narrative in your own head. Get it smooth and fluent. Say it over and over again. In your life as an English speaker you will have to use this narrative many times. Be sure that you can say it fluently. Pay attention when other people give you their narratives. These simple things can give you many insights into a person’s personality. These geographical details can tell you many things about each person you meet. They will help you to understand that person. They will make you more aware of how the other person thinks.

These biographical narratives are very important in English. Is it the same in your language? Do you often tell people where you are from and where you moved to and where you grew up and where you studied? Write and tell us your narrative.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

When somebody else is giving you their narrative you can ask questions.

Say these phrases aloud. Make sure that they roll automatically off your tongue:

were you born in
did you move to
did you move to
did you move to
did you grow up in
did you go to
did you go to
did you study

Here is a silly little game that you can play. It will improve your fluency a lot. You can do it by yourself. Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed and you will not disturb others.

Say these sentences as fast as you can:

I was born in Istanbul.
I moved to Izmir.
I moved to Ankara.
I moved back to Istanbul again.
I grew up in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara.
I went to school in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara.
I studied computers and electronic engineering.
Now do it again but insert these statements:
I was born in Istanbul.
Oh you were born in Istanbul.
I moved to Izmir.
Oh you moved to Izmir.
I moved to Ankara.
Oh you moved to Ankara.
I moved back to Istanbul again.
Oh you moved back to Istanbul again.
I grew up in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara.
Oh you grew up in three places.
I studied computers and electronics.
Oh you studied computers and electronics.

The Free Parts of Conversation and the Set Parts

Some educators think this rote learning type singing style is old fashioned and ineffective but I know that it is extremely effective because I use it myself when I learn other languages.

There are free parts of conversation but there are many parts that are not free. Master the parts that are not free (the parts that are set) and then the parts that are free will become easy.

If you go to the gym you can build up your muscles. If you have strong muscles, you can do great things. First you must develop the muscles. That means learn to say those phrases “did you move”, “did you study in”, “did you go to” really quickly and easily. Learn to say them fluidly.

Language is an intellectual activity. However you can transcend this intellectual activity. You can make it a song or even a muscular exercise. Make it a game. A physical game.

Go through these patterns again. Say them over and over again without looking at the paper. Say your own narrative (about your life) over and over again without reading it.

Say it on the train when you are going to work. Say it on the bus. Close your eyes, Sit quietly. Run the narrative through your mind. Say it to yourself in your mind. Say it to yourself in your mind with your eyes closed. Master it.

Run through this one again first:

I was born in Brisbane.
I moved to Blackall.
Then I moved to Mt Isa.
Then I moved back to Brisbane again.
I grew up in Blackall and Mt Isa and Brisbane.
I went to school in Blackall and Mt Isa and Brisbane.
I went to university in Brisbane.
I studied history and languages.

Past and Present Tenses

is born
was born
move
moved
move
moved
move
moved
grow up in
grew up in
go to school in
went to school in
go to college in
went to college in
study
studied

Questions

were you born in
did you move to
did you move to
did you move to
did you grow up in
did you go to
did you go to
did you study

Another Narrative

I was born in Istanbul.
I moved to Izmir.
I moved to Ankara.
I moved back to Istanbul again.
I grew up in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara.
I went to school in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara.
I studied computers and electronic engineering.

A Narrative with Reactions

I was born in Istanbul.
Oh you were born in Istanbul.
I moved to Izmir.
Oh you moved to Izmir.
I moved to Ankara.
Oh you moved to Ankara.
I moved back to Istanbul again.
Oh you moved back to Istanbul again.
I grew up in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara.
Oh you grew up in three places.
I studied computers and electronics.
Oh you studied computers and electronics.

Common Mistakes

Note that when we form questions in a conversation we use this pattern:

NOT Did you move to
Did you moved to (which is wrong)

AND

NOT Did you go to
Did you went to (which is wrong)

AND

Did you study

NOT

Did you studied (which is wrong)

AND

Were you born in

NOT

Did you born in (which is wrong)

Passive Voice

Look at these variations:

am born

is born

are born

was born

were born

They are all common.

Be careful. The present tense forms “am born”, “is born”, “are born” are far less common than the past tense forms “was born” and “were born”.

In English we generally say “I was born in Paris” rather than “I am born in Paris” and “He was born in Berlin” rather than “He is born in Berlin”. English uses the past form of the auxiliary verb (was, were) but German and French use the present form (am, is, are). Each language is different.

Look at these forms of the verb “to move”:

move

moves

am moving

is moving

are moving

moved

was moving

were moving

will move

will be moving

am going to move

is going to move

are going to move

am going to be moving

is going to be moving

are going to be moving
was going to move
were going to move
have moved
has moved
had moved

Say them over and over like a song. Do not worry about the meaning. Be aware of the fact that those phrases are correct. Those phrases are the only ones you will have to use when you talk about moving. You will never have to say:

did moved (wrong)
was move (wrong)
is move (wrong)
did moving (wrong)
want move (wrong)
will moved (wrong)
was going move (wrong)
going move (wrong)
have moving (wrong)

Never. Never ever! This is a very important point. Many students of English intellectualise the language too much. They think about it too much. They think about it too much but they do not use it.

They think about possible grammatical patterns. They think about possible grammatical patterns but they are not familiar with the actual ones. They are not familiar with the real ones. They are not familiar with the ones that are used.

There is only a limited number of patterns. There is only a limited number of ways to use the verb “move”. There is only a limited number of ways to say it.

The list is long but it is not incredibly long. You can learn it. Once you have learned it, you can use it as a paradigm to understand all the other verbs.

Try substituting the word “think” for the word “move”.

One way to learn it is to see it as song. Say the phrases over and over again and let them roll out of your mouth like water, like music. Here is the list again. Say it as fast as you can. Do not think about the meanings.

move
moves
am moving
is moving
are moving
moved
was moving
were moving
will move
will be moving

am going to move
is going to move
are going to move
am going to be moving
is going to be moving
are going to be moving
was going to move
were going to move
have moved
has moved
had moved

Do the words roll off your tongue? Do you notice a rhythm? The number of syllables will create a rhythm if you repeat it over and over again. Language is many things. One of the things, that it is, is a song. [Language is a song. Sing it again.](#) Tap your foot as you sing:

move
moves
am moving
is moving
are moving
moved
was moving
were moving
will move
will be moving
am going to move
is going to move
are going to move
am going to be moving
is going to be moving
are going to be moving
was going to move
were going to move
have moved
has moved
had moved

That is it. Are you familiar with the sounds? Can you enunciate each word clearly? When you have to say these words, you will be able to say them quickly and easily. That is important. If you stumble over your words, people will become impatient with you. Sing the list again.

move
moves
am moving
is moving
are moving
moved
was moving

were moving
will move
will be moving
am going to move
is going to move
are going to move
am going to be moving
is going to be moving
are going to be moving
was going to move
were going to move
have moved
has moved
had moved

That is enough singing. Let's move on to the next language point:

Place Names

Look at these words:

the States
the US
America

These are the most common ways to say the name of that country. It is also possible to say:

The United States
The United States of America
but they are a little less common.

The Idea of One

Look at these uses of the word "united"

the United Kingdom
the United States
the United Nations
the United Arab Emirates
United Airlines
United Food
a united Germany
a united Korea

"To unite" means "to bring together as one". The verb "unite" can be transitive (it has a direct object). Look at these examples:

Tokugawa united Japan.
Garibaldi united Italy.

It can also be intransitive (it has no direct object). Look at these examples:

The different [clans](#) of [Scotland](#) united. (with each other)

The different [cantons](#) of [Switzerland](#) united. (with each other) (They formed a union)

In English there is a saying: United we stand, divided we fall. It means: There is strength in numbers. If people bind together and work together as a unit, they are more powerful than if they try to do things individually. There are many words that describe the idea of bringing many things together to create one thing. Here are some examples:

union
unionise
unity
universal
unitary
communion (with union)
communal
communist
commune
community
unionist
unilateral

Look these words up in a dictionary. When you are reading and you see words like these, you know they have something to do with the idea of one or the idea of joining everything together to make one unit. This is an extremely significant idea. You can find it in many areas of life. [Life is full of many forms but the essence is one!](#)

“Which place?” or “...which is the next place” ?

Let’s talk about moving again. Imagine you have moved. I will ask you about it. Here is a list of questions I can ask you about where you moved to:

which state (America or Australia)
which city
which province (Canada)
which country
which prefecture (Japan)
which department (France)
which place
which area
which village
which region
which part of the country
which Land (Germany)

The word “which” is actually two words. There are two words but they are spelled the same and they are pronounced the same. There are two different meanings. Look at this group of phrases:

which is the next state over
which is the next state up from
which is the next state down from

Compare these phrases with the ones we just looked at:

which state
which city
which province
which country
which prefecture
which department
which place
which area
which village
which region
which part of the country
which Land

When we say “which State?” it is a question. When we say “I moved to Ohio, which is the next state over from Illinois” we use “which” as a relative pronoun.

Look at these phrases:

the next state north
the next state south
the next state east
the next state west
the next one north
the next one south
the next one east
the next one west
the next province north
the next province east
the next province west
the next province south

If you ever have to use these terms, get them right the first time. Don’t stumble over your words wondering if it is “next province” or “next the province”. Know that it is “the next province south” or “the next province over” every time you use these expressions. Master them. Control them. Use them with confidence.

The Japanese, for some reason, use the word “prefecture” to describe their regions rather than “states” or “provinces”. One might say that “Japan has no states”. It has “prefectures” instead. They are basically the same thing however. It is just a situation of having two different names for the same thing. We use these phrases to talk about them:

the next prefecture
the next prefecture over
the next prefecture north (the next prefecture up)
the next prefecture south (the next prefecture down)
the next prefecture west
the next prefecture east

Note that in our imagination “north” means “up” and “south” means “down” because we imagine we are looking at a map in a book. The “up” part of the map is usually “north”. It usually represents “north”. Usually, but not always. Be careful. Be aware. Be aware of what you are looking at.

These forms are also very common:

the next prefecture to the east
the next prefecture to the west
the next prefecture to the south
the next prefecture to the north

However I would not say “the next state to the north” or “the next province to the north”. Those forms are possible, but for some reason I would not use them.

What is the reason? Why is it? Why is it that those forms seem to make sense, but they are not used (by me)? They seem to be quite sensible and it would seem to make sense to use them. Why don't we use them? Why don't we tend to say them? Why don't I say them?

From the point of view of the language learner, this is not an important question. I personally think it is a very interesting question but from the point of view of the language learner, it is not important. It is simply so. That is how it is. That is the way it is. That is how we speak. That is how we talk.

It is a good idea to remember that. Whenever you get a chance to exchange words with a native speaker, pay attention to how that person phrases things. Try to phrase things in the same way.

Language is creative at a certain level but in the early stages of mastering the language it is better to be familiar with how things are commonly said and to be aware of how native speakers say things.

It is true that the native speaker is not the central or sole source of English for many students. They learn a variation of the language, which has been modified by their own teacher who is not a native speaker. There are many different types of native speakers too.

However we have to try to point our words and thoughts towards some kind of agreed idea on what words mean, otherwise we will lose sight of our object and that is communication. We are trying to communicate with each other. We are trying to understand each other. We are trying to express our own thoughts and feelings. If we understand others correctly and express ourselves clearly, we will understand each

other. If we understand each other we will be able to work together. We will be able to co-operate. We will be able to be friends. We will be able to share life on earth together.

Now let's look at some different places on earth and ask questions about them. Can you answer the questions? Click the links to the maps and then say the answers to the questions aloud.

Look at a map and answer these questions. Say your answer aloud.

[Map of the USA](#)

Which state is the next one over from Oregon?

Which state is the next one west of Louisiana?

Which state is the next one up from Kansas?

[Map of Australia](#)

Which state is the next one up from New South Wales?

Which state is the next one west from Victoria?

Past Simple or Present Perfect?

Let's go back to our question about where you moved to.

I can say:

Which state did you move to?

Which state have you moved to?

Do you know the difference?

The first one is in [past simple tense](#) so it suggests the movement took place a long time ago in a faraway place and is part of other events in a narrative. The second one is in [present perfect tense](#) and it is more immediate, for example the person just moved to this country and you want to know which state he has moved to so you can give him some practical advice or information that he needs.

Varieties of Language

Look at these words:

accent

dialect

We should not judge another person by his accent or his dialect. We all (most of us) learn to speak from our mothers. How else would we speak than the way our mother speaks? If we do not speak in this way then there must be a reason for it.

Technically speaking there is no clear definition of what a dialect is. [Danish](#) and [Swedish](#) and Norwegian are mutually intelligible but they are called different languages.

Indonesian and [Malaysian](#) are mutually intelligible but they are called different languages. Russian and Ukrainian are mutually intelligible but they are called different

languages. [Serbian](#) and Croatian are mutually intelligible but they are called different languages. There are many examples.

People in different parts of China cannot understand each other although their language is called “Chinese” and they are supposed to speak dialects of Chinese. People in different parts of the European Alps cannot understand each other although their languages are both called “German”. People in different parts of England cannot understand each other completely although their language is called “English”.

Each language has many different variants and those variants sometimes exist in different parts of the same country:

In France we find:

[Provence dialect](#)
[Paris dialect](#)

In England we find:

[Geordie](#) accent
London accent
Liverpool accent
Manchester accent
Birmingham accent
Scottish accent
Irish accent
In the Arabic-speaking countries we find:
Egyptian Arabic
Syrian Arabic
Iraqi Arabic
Saudi Arabic
and so on.

“Accent” is usually more thought of as different pronunciation of the same words while “dialect” is more different words or word endings. This is not a strict rule however. There is no clear consistent definition of a distinction between different varieties of speech in terms of quality.

In the minds of people it is a different matter. People’s ideas of social class come into play. People think this dialect is higher class than that one or that dialect is lower class than that one.

Some people think the word “dialect” implies some kind of inferiority. This is a very unscientific way of thinking. It is a class-ist way of thinking similar to the idea about caste systems and of royalty that some people have and similar to the idea of people being born to live out a particular destiny and speak a particular language because of some quality of their soul.

We forget that we all learned to speak from our mothers. Our fathers and friends and teachers influenced us of course, and sometimes this caused tension because of the different ways of speaking. And some of us never knew our mothers. But most of us

learned to speak by being around our mothers or grandmothers. They taught us to defecate in the toilet and speak like humans instead of growling and shrieking like animals.

Do you think some dialect is inferior to another dialect? Do you know some person who is inferior because he speaks a particular dialect?

Standard Italian is the Sienna [dialect](#).
Standard German is the [Hannover dialect](#).
Standard Japanese is the [Tokyo dialect](#).

What is the situation with dialects and standard languages in your country? Write and tell us about your language and your variety of language. Tell us about Hindi and Arabic and Chinese and Turkish and Korean and Bahasa and Tamil and Telegu and Portuguese and French and German and Russian and Japanese and Flemish and Finnish and Thai and Vietnamese.... Tell us about how you speak and how it is different from the way people speak in other parts of your country.

[Varieties of Language](#)

Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases

When we talk about accents we can say:

it is pretty close
they are pretty close

Let's look at a spelling problem:

That city is pretty close.
Will you close the door please?

The two words "close" as in "pretty close" and "close" as in "close the door" are spelt the same. They are spelled the same but they are pronounced differently.

"Close" as in "close the door" rhymes with "nose" and "close" as in "they are pretty close" rhymes with "dose" as in "a dose of medicine"

"Pretty close" means "pretty similar" or "quite similar". Look at this scale:

very close
pretty close
quite close
close
not very close
not so close
not close at all

Distinguishing

Look at the next language point. When we distinguish between two things we:

tell the difference
notice the difference
distinguish them

Degrees of Probability

These sentences mean about the same thing:

you would probably be able to tell the difference
you would probably be able to distinguish them
you would probably be able to notice the difference

These ones have the same meaning, too:

you could probably distinguish them
you could probably notice the difference
you could probably tell the difference

To show degrees of certainty you can say:

You could definitely tell the difference.
You could probably tell the difference.
You might be able to tell the difference.
You may be able to tell the difference.
There is a slight chance you might be able to tell the difference.
There is a slim chance you might be able to tell the difference.

Each sentence shows a decreasing level of probability.

Growing Up

There are a number of ways to talk about where you grew up:

I grew up in England.
I was raised in England.
I was brought up in England.

Going to School

There are a few ways to talk about where you went to school:

I attended school in Switzerland.
I went to school in Switzerland.
I was sent to school in Switzerland.

Growing Tomatoes and Growing up

Do not confuse “grew up” and “grew”. They are very different.

“Grew up” is intransitive. It has no direct object:

I grew up in Australia.

I myself grew up. There is no object. “Australia” is not a direct object.

“I grew tomatoes” is transitive. “I” is the subject. “Grew” is the verb. “Tomatoes” is the object.

Education Systems

The education system in most countries is hierarchical. This is the normal hierarchy:

elementary school - primary school
junior high school
senior high school
college
university

“Elementary school” is an American term. “Primary school” is a British term.

Primary education refers to school for students from the ages of five to twelve.

Secondary education refers to high school for students from the ages of thirteen to seventeen or eighteen.

Tertiary education refers to college or university education.

Write and tell us about the education system in your country.

Education Systems

“Primary”, “secondary” and “tertiary” basically mean “first”, “second” and “third”.

We talk about:

primary industry (mining, agriculture or farming)

secondary industry (manufacturing)

tertiary industry or service industry (services like education, computer technology, telecommunications, media, sales)

Study Subjects

There are many things you can study at university. Here are some of them:

politics, philosophy and economics
religion and philosophy
languages and literature
business and economics

economics and business management
 economics and politics
 law and commerce
 science and technology
 science and engineering
 medicine
 history and geography
 education
 architecture
 engineering
 computer programming
 ecology and the natural environment
 international relations
 anthropology and sociology

Sometimes you can form words from these words for jobs and other activities but not always. The English language is not usually neat and regular and well ordered. It is often chaotic and haphazard and irregular, like life. Look at these words and check their meanings in a free online dictionary.

religion priest, monk
 philosophy..... philosopher, philosophy professor philosophy teacher
 language..... linguist, language teacher, philologist
 literaturewriter, poet, teacher, university lecturer
 business..... businessman, manager
 economicseconomist, economics teacher, politician, business manager
 politicspolitician, political analyst, lobbyist
 law..... lawyer, solicitor, barrister, justice of the peace (JP)
 science..... scientist, researcher
 technology.....scientist
 engineeringengineer
 medicinedoctor, GP, general practitioner, surgeon
 historyhistorian, history teacher, lecturer
 geographygeographer, geography teacher, climatologist
 education..... educator, teacher, professor, lecturer, tutor, instructor

Section B: Listening Activities

Listen to the conversation and mark the phrase that you hear:

I was born in the UK.
I was born in the US.
I was born in the UAE

we moved to the United Kingdom
we moved to the United States
we moved to the United Emirates

which city did you move to?
which province did you move to?
which state did you move to?
which area did you move to?

you could probably tell the difference
you would probably be able to tell the difference
you could probably distinguish them
you would probably be able to distinguish them
you could probably tell them apart
you would probably be able to tell them apart

Did you go to university in Connecticut?
Did you go to college in Connecticut?
Did you go to school in Connecticut?

I went to college in New York City.
I went to school in New York City.
I went to university in New York City.