

Should in that-clauses; the present subjunctive

A

We can sometimes report advice, orders, requests, suggestions, etc. about things that need to be done or are desirable using a **that-clause** with **should + bare infinitive**:

- They have proposed that Felix **should** *move* to their Munich office.
- We advised **that** the company **should not** *raise* its prices.

After **should** we often use **be + past participle** (passive) or **be + adjective**:

- They directed **that** the building **should** *be pulled down*.
- We insist **that** the money **should** *be available* to all students in financial difficulties.

B

In formal contexts, particularly in written English, we can often leave out **should** and use only the base form of the verb (that is, the form you would look up in a dictionary). This form is the *present subjunctive* (see Unit 85A for the *past subjunctive*) and is used to describe bringing about the situation expressed in the **that-clause**:

- They have proposed that Felix **move** to their Munich office.
- They directed that the building **be pulled down**.

Other verbs used with the present subjunctive:
advise, ask, beg, command, demand, insist, instruct, intend, order, prefer, recommend, request, require, stipulate, suggest, urge, warn

To make a negative form, we use **not** (*not* 'do not') before the verb:

- We advised that the company **not** *raise* its prices.

In less formal contexts we can use ordinary forms of the verb instead of the *subjunctive*. Compare:

- I suggested that he **should give up** golf. (*negative*: ... that he **shouldn't** give up ...)
- I suggested that he **give up** golf. (more formal) (*negative*: ... that he **not** give up ...)
- I suggested that he **gives up** golf. (less formal) (*negative*: ... that he **doesn't** give up ...)

C

We can also use **that-clauses** with **should** or the subjunctive after *reporting clauses* with nouns related to the verbs in B (e.g. **advice, order, proposal, warning**):

- The police issued an **order** that all weapons (should) be handed in immediately.
- The weather forecast gave a **warning** that people (should) prepare for heavy snow.

D

We can also use **should** or sometimes the subjunctive in a **that-clause** after **it + be + adjective**:

- It is inappropriate** that he (*should*) *receive* the award again. (*or* ... that he *receives* ...)

Also: advisable, appalling, appropriate, (in)conceivable, crucial, essential, imperative, important, obligatory, (un)necessary, urgent, vital

E

We can use **should** in a **that-clause** when we talk about our own reaction to something we are reporting, particularly after **be + adjective**. Compare:

- I am concerned* that she **should think** I stole the money (*or* ... that she **thinks** ...)

Also: amazed, amused, anxious, astounded, disappointed, shocked, surprised, upset

Note that when we leave out **should** in sentences like this (= less formal) we use an ordinary tense, not a subjunctive.

F

We can use **should** in a **that-clause** to talk about a situation that exists now:

- It's not surprising that they **should** *be seen* together – they're brothers.

or one that may exist in the future:

- We believe it is important that she **should** *take* the exam next year.

If we are talking about an intention or plan, we can often use a *subjunctive* rather than **should**:

- I've arranged that she **come** to the first part of the meeting. (*or* ... that she **should come** ... / ... that she **comes** ... / ... for her **to come** ...)

Exercises

39.1 Report these statements from a Spanit Engineering Company board meeting. Use a **that-clause** with **should** (**should + bare infinitive** or **should + be + past participle**). **A-C**

- 1 Lee said: 'I think it's important to expand business in South America.'
Lee felt that business in South America should be expanded.
- 2 Lee said: 'Mara Bianchi would make an excellent export manager. Let's promote her.'
Lee urged
- 3 Alice said: 'It would be valuable for us to send a sales representative to South Africa.'
Alice recommended
- 4 Alice said: 'The Delaware Bridge project ought to be completed by August next year.'
Alice reported
- 5 Simon said: 'It is vital to keep to our work schedules.'
Simon insisted
- 6 Simon said: 'I'd like all monthly reports sent to me directly.'
Simon instructed
- 7 Alina said: 'Perhaps we could use web conferencing for meetings to save money on air fares.'
Alina suggested
- 8 Alina said: 'Our head office must remain in London.'
Alina declared
- 9 Nathan said: 'It's okay for us to sponsor the European chess league for the next three years.'
Nathan agreed
- 10 Nathan said: 'In future, all claims for travel expenses are to be made in US dollars.'
Nathan announced

39.2 Look again at your answers for 39.1. Can any of the sentences be written without **should** and still be correct? Write 'yes' if it is possible and 'no' if not. **A-C**

- 1 ~~Lee felt that business in South America be expanded.~~ **No**

39.3 Expand the notes using a **that-clause** with **should** and an adjective from the box to make reporting sentences. More than one adjective may be possible, but use each once only. **D & E**

amused appalling astounded imperative
inconceivable shocked upset urgent

- 1 It is ... / she / marry Ben.
It is inconceivable that she should marry Ben.
- 2 I am ... / Kristina / behave so badly.
- 3 I am ... / anyone / vote for him.
- 4 It is ... / he / return home immediately.
- 5 I am ... / he / take his appearance so seriously.
- 6 I am ... / they / think I had cheated them.
- 7 It is ... / they / allowed to go free.
- 8 It is ... / we / act now to avoid war.

Agreement between subject and verb 1

A

If a sentence has a singular subject, it is followed by a singular verb, and if it has a plural subject, it is followed by a plural verb; that is, the verb *agrees with* the subject. Compare:

Reminder → H1–H3

- She** lives in China. *and* **More people** live in Asia than in any other continent.

When the subject of the sentence is complex the following verb must agree with the main noun in the subject. In the examples below the subject is underlined and the main noun is circled. Note how the verb, in italics, agrees with the main noun:

- Many leading members of the opposition party have criticised the delay.
 The only excuse that he gave for his actions was that he was tired.

The verb must agree with the subject when the subject follows the verb (see Units 99 & 100):

- Displayed on the board were **the exam results**. (*compare* The exam results were displayed ...)

B

If the subject is a clause, we usually use a singular verb:

- To keep these young people in prison is inhuman.
 Having overall responsibility for the course means that I have a lot of meetings.
 Whoever took them remains a mystery.

However, if we use a **what-clause** as subject (see Unit 98B), we use a singular verb if the following main noun is singular, and either a singular or a plural verb if the following main noun is plural (although a plural verb is preferred in more formal contexts):

- What worries us is the poor selection **process**.
 What is needed are additional **resources**. (*or more colloquially ... needed is ...*)

C

Some nouns with a singular form, referring to groups of some kind, can be used with either a singular or plural form of the verb. These nouns are sometimes called *collective nouns*:

- The council** has (or have) postponed a decision on the new road.

We use a singular verb if the focus is on the institution or organisation as a whole unit, and a plural verb if the focus is on a collection of individuals. Often you can use either with very little difference in meaning, although in formal contexts (such as academic writing) it is common to use a singular verb.

Also: army, association, audience, class, club, college, commission, committee, community, company, crew, crowd, department, electorate, enemy, family, federation, generation, government, group, institute, jury, opposition, orchestra, population, press, public, school, team, university; the Bank of England, the BBC, IBM, Sony, the United Nations (specific organisations)

In some contexts we have to use a singular or a plural form of the verb.

<input type="checkbox"/> The committee usually raise their hands to vote 'Yes'. (<i>not</i> The committee usually raises its hands ...)	This is something the individuals do, not the committee as a whole.
<input type="checkbox"/> The school is to close next year. (<i>not</i> The school are to close ...)	This is something that will happen to the school as a building or institution, not to the individuals in the school.

D

When names and titles ending in -s refer to a single unit we use a singular verb. Examples include countries; newspapers; titles of books, films, etc.; and quoted plural words or phrases:

- At this time of the year *the Netherlands* is one hour ahead of the UK.
 The Machine Gunners was one of Robert Westall's most successful books.
 '*Daps*' is the word used in the south-west of the country for sports shoes.

40.1 Correct ten mistakes in the italicised verbs in this museum review. **A & B**

Museums and historic sites
The Rivers Museum
Open: 9 am – 5 pm,
Mon – Sat
Entrance: Free

The Rivers Museum on the corner of Corn Street and New Road ^{houses} ¹*house* a fascinating collection of art and other objects which begins as soon as you step through the door. Among the most eye-catching pieces in the whole collection ²*is* the marble animal sculptures under two arches on the left of the entrance hall. Whoever created these figures apparently ³*remain* a mystery, but the skill of the craftspeople who worked on them ⁴*is* obvious. Hanging on the wall directly opposite the carvings ⁵*is* over a hundred swords from the 17th century. The narrow doorway between the arches ⁶*let* you into a series of smaller rooms where paintings from the 18th and 19th centuries ⁷*are* on display. If paintings aren't your thing, the museum's incredible collection of seashells and fossils in the final room ⁸*are* sure to be of interest. Perhaps what is most surprising about the building itself ⁹*are* the bell tower in the small courtyard. Only since the restoration work was completed in 2011 ¹⁰*have* the tower been open, and climbing the 150 steps to the top to take in the view over the city ¹¹*is* well worth the effort. Over 50 full-time staff and volunteers ¹²*is* employed and having so many of them available to answer questions about the collection ¹³*add* to the pleasure of this must-see museum.

40.2 Complete each sentence with a noun from the box and an appropriate form of the verb in brackets (singular, plural or both). **C**

audience class jury orchestra press
~~team~~ the United Nations university

- The volleyball team play / plays twice a week in the summer. (*play*)
- If the _____ to host the conference, I just don't know where we will be able to hold it. (*refuse*)
- The worldwide television _____ for tomorrow's cup final _____ expected to be 200 million. (*be*)
- The _____ classical concerts throughout the year. (*perform*)
- The Waterman's Junior Book Prize _____ three adults and three children. (*include*)
- The _____ all passed the end-of-year exam. (*have*)
- The _____ a picture of chaos in our schools, but it's just not like that at all. (*present*)
- _____ ordered an investigation into the capture of members of its peace-keeping force in eastern Africa. (*have*)

40.3 If necessary, correct the mistakes in these sentences or write ✓ if they are already correct.

A–D

- The United States come top of the list of countries ranked by economic performance.
- The people I know who have seen the film say that it's really good.
- The *New Straits Times* report that tourism is booming in Malaysia.
- Northern Lights* are one of Suzanne's favourite books.
- The stairs leading to the first floor were steep and poorly lit.
- Chequers is the country house of the British Prime Minister.
- Whoever made all the mess in the kitchen have to clear it up.
- The phrase 'men in white coats' are used to talk about psychiatrists.
- The public needs to be kept informed about progress in the peace talks.
- Musical chairs are a party game where everyone dashes for a seat when the music stops.

Talking about exceptions

A

We use **except (for)** to introduce the only thing(s) or person / people that a statement does not include:

- The price of the holiday includes all meals **except (for)** lunch.
- Everyone seemed to have been invited **except (for)** Mrs Woodford and me.
- I had no money to give him **except (for)** the few coins in my pocket.

We use **except**, not **except for**, with **to-infinitives**, and **that-clauses**:

- I rarely need to go into the city centre **except to do** some shopping.
- They look just like the real thing, **except that** they're made of plastic.

We usually use **except** before **prepositions**, **bare infinitives**, and **that-clauses** including those where the word *that* is left out (see Unit 53). However, informally **except for** is sometimes also used, although this is grammatically incorrect:

- There is likely to be rain everywhere today **except in** Wales.
- There is nothing more the doctor can do **except keep** an eye on him.
- They look just like the real thing, **except (that)** they're made of plastic.

We can use **except for**, but not **except**, with the meaning 'but for' (see C below).

B

We use **except (for)** to mean that something is not included in a particular statement, but we use **besides** to mean 'as well as' or 'in addition to'. Compare:

- I don't enjoy watching any sports **except (for)** cricket. (= I enjoy only cricket) *and*
- Besides** cricket, I enjoy watching football and basketball. (= I enjoy three sports)
- I haven't read anything by her, **except (for)** one of her short stories. *and*
- Besides** her novels and poems, she published a number of short stories.

Apart from can be used with the same meanings as both **except (for)** and **besides**:

- I don't enjoy watching any sports **apart from** cricket. (= except for)
- Apart from** cricket, I enjoy watching football and basketball. (= besides; as well as)

C

We can use **but** with a similar meaning to **except (for)**, particularly after negative words such as **no**, **nobody**, and **nothing**:

- After the operation he could see *nothing but / except (for) / apart from* vague shadows.
- There was *no way out but / except / apart from* upwards, towards the light.

But for has a different meaning from **except for**. We use it to say what would or might have happened if the thing introduced by **but for** had not happened:

- The country would now be self-sufficient in food **but for** the drought last year. (= if there hadn't been the drought ...)
- But for** the leg injury he suffered last year, he would probably have been picked for the national team by now. (= if he hadn't injured his leg ...)

However, some people use **except for** in the same way as **but for**, particularly in informal spoken English:

- I'd have got there on time **except for** the taxi being late. (*or ... but for* the taxi being late.)
- Except for** the problems with my computer, I would have got the book finished weeks ago. (*or But for* the problems with my computer ...)

Note that we can use **excepted**, **apart** or **aside** after mentioning a person or thing to say that they are not included in the statement we make:

- It has been, 1984 **excepted / apart / aside**, the hottest July for the last 100 years.

Exercises

91.1 Complete the sentences with **except** or **except for**. Indicate where both are possible. **A & C**

- 1 He was dressed very smartly that his shoes were dirty.
- 2 I liked everything in the meal the cabbage.
- 3 I had nothing to do sit by the pool and relax.
- 4 We would have gone walking last week the terrible weather.
- 5 She had no choice to wait for the next train.
- 6 There are very few wolves left in the country in the northern forests.
- 7 All the puddings on the menu cost €6 the ice cream, which was €4.
- 8 I'm in the office all the time at lunchtimes.
- 9 She might have won the race hitting the last fence.
- 10 The plant is found on every continent Africa.
- 11 He gave no excuse for turning up late that he was tired.
- 12 I drove all the way without stopping to buy petrol.

91.2 If necessary, correct these sentences with **besides** or **except (for)**. If the sentence is already correct, write ✓. **B**

- 1 She had never been out of the country besides a week in Ireland as a child.
- 2 Besides being small, Denmark is very flat, with villages linked by country roads.
- 3 The new road will increase traffic in the area except for damaging an area of woodland.
- 4 Except for his novels, Campbell wrote a number of biographies.
- 5 There was nothing in the fridge besides a rather mouldy piece of cheese.
- 6 He was unhurt in the crash except for a bruise on his forehead.



91.3 Match pairs of sentences and rewrite them as single sentences beginning **But for the ...**. **C**

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Katerina gave me excellent directions. | a If it hadn't, the building would have been completed by now. |
| 2 The bad weather caused interruptions. | b Without this, human rights would not have improved in the country. |
| 3 The charity supplied food and medicines. | c Otherwise, many more people would have died in the famine. |
| 4 The trees provided shelter. | d If it hadn't, I would not have been able to set up my business. |
| 5 The EU threatened sanctions. | e Without these, I would have got totally lost. |
| 6 The bank gave me a loan. | f Otherwise, the wind would have caused even more damage to the house. |

1 + e But for the excellent directions Katerina gave me, I would have got totally lost.

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A

Some verbs are frequently followed by particular prepositions:

	<i>about</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>with</i>
<i>agree</i>	✓			✓	✓
<i>argue</i>	✓	✓			✓
<i>ask</i>	✓	✓	✓		
<i>care</i>	✓	✓			
<i>know</i>	✓		✓		
<i>learn</i>	✓		✓		
<i>talk</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓

B

about usually means 'concerning a particular thing':

- They began to **learn about** nutrition when they were at primary school.

We use **care about** to talk about something we are (not) concerned about:

- He doesn't seem to **care about** the effect a poor diet has on him.

for is used with **ask** to talk about what people want:

- He finished the drink quickly and **asked for** another.

with **argue** when we talk about giving reasons why something is true or right:

- Many people **are arguing for** a big tax cut.

and with **care** to talk about doing the necessary things for someone or something in order to keep them in good health or condition:

- Jo **cared for** her disabled mother until her death last year. (or Jo **took care of** ...)

or to mean 'like', particularly in negative sentences, and to mean 'want' in offers. Both of these uses of **care for** are rather formal:

- I don't **care for** the theatre much.
- Would you **care for** a cup of coffee?

of is used with **talk**, **know**, and **learn** to talk about discussing, having or getting information:

- Mira went recently to Laos and can **talk of** nothing else. (or less formally ... **talk about** ...)
- The whole country **knew of** Churchill's love of cigars. (or less formally ... **knew about** ...)
- I have just **learnt of** the death of Dr Ramirez. (or less formally ... **learnt about** ...)

We use **ask of** when we make or talk about requests:

- I have a favour to **ask of** you and your sister.

on is used with **talk** and **agree** to mean 'concerned with a particular topic':

- I was asked to **talk on** my research. (or ... to **talk about** ...)
- We **agreed on** a time to meet. (usually there has been previous discussion or disagreement.)

Note that we use **agree to** to say that someone allows something to happen:

- Once the government **agreed to** the scheme it went ahead without delay.

with is used with **argue** and **talk** when we go on to mention the person involved:

- I used to **argue / talk with** Pedro for hours.

We use **agree with** to say that two people have the same opinion:

- Adam thinks we should accept the offer, and I **agree with** him.

and to say that we approve of a particular idea or action:

- I **agree with** letting children choose the clothes they wear. (or I **agree about / on** ...)

or to say that two descriptions are the same:

- Stefan's story **agreed with** that of his son.

Exercises

92.1 Cross out any incorrect prepositions. **A**

- 1 I only advertised the car for sale on Wednesday, but by the end of the week ten people had phoned to ask *of / for / about* it.
- 2 We can learn a great deal *after / about / for* the oceans by studying even a small piece of coral.
- 3 I didn't agree *about / for / with* a word of what she said.
- 4 Professor Owen is giving a talk *of / with / on* the Romans in Lecture Hall 1.
- 5 I had to care *for / after / about* my elderly parents when they both became ill.
- 6 For many years we have been arguing *for / on / with* changes in the way the college is managed.
- 7 She didn't know *of / about / on* her stepbrother's existence until her mother died.

92.2 Complete the sentences using the correct or most appropriate preposition from section A. Sometimes two answers are possible. **A & B**

- 1 On the website they ask your email address.
- 2 I first learnt his decision to resign on the radio last night.
- 3 We're going to talk the council about planting some new trees in the park.
- 4 I don't care pop music at all. I much prefer classical music.
- 5 The teacher says we've got to do the test, so there's no point in arguing it.
- 6 Scientists do not agree the origin of the universe.
- 7 If you know any reasons why you should not be given medical insurance, you must declare them here.
- 8 A: Josh can be really stupid sometimes.
B: You shouldn't talk your brother like that.
- 9 She's always arguing her parents about what to watch on television.
- 10 I know it's a lot to ask you, but would you look after the children while I'm in Japan on business?
- 11 The course was brilliant. We learnt using the Internet in teaching writing.
- 12 A: Dan said he'll try to fix my car.
B: What does he know cars?
- 13 I don't think the government cares enough nursery education to fund it properly.
- 14 After days of discussion, the committee agreed the amount of money to donate.

92.3 These pairs of sentences include more verbs that are commonly followed by the prepositions in A. Can you explain the difference in meaning? Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 1 a The police *acted on* the information very quickly.
b I couldn't be at the meeting, so my solicitor *acted for* me.
- 2 a I've been *thinking* a lot *about* your idea, and I've decided I'd like to support you.
b What do you *think of* the colour in the bedroom?
- 3 a Doctors have *called on* the Health Minister to resign.
b Campaigners have *called for* a referendum on the issue.
- 4 a They say he *worked for* the CIA in the 1980s.
b She *works with* computers.
- 5 a We're *counting on* Julia to supply the food for the party.
b Playing exciting basketball *counts for* little if the team isn't winning.