

22 Other uses of will/would, shall/should

For **will/shall** in commands, see 282.

For **will/would** in requests, see 284.

For **will/would** in invitations, see 286.

For **would/should** used with like, prefer, wish etc., see chapter 29.

230 Habits expressed by will, would

- A Habits in the present are normally expressed by the simple present tense; but **will + infinitive** can be used instead when we wish to emphasize the characteristics of the performer rather than the action performed. It is chiefly used in general statements:

An Englishman will usually show you the way in the street. (It is normal for an Englishman to act in this way.)

This is not a very important use of **will**, but the past form, **would**, has a much wider use and can replace **used to** when we are describing a past routine:

On Sundays he used to/would get up early and go fishing. He used to/would spend the whole day by the river and in the evening used to/would come home with marvellous stories of the fish he had nearly caught.

Note, however, that when **used to** expresses a discontinued habit, it cannot be replaced by **would**. (See 162.)

Both **will** and **would** can be contracted when used as above.

- B **will** can also express obstinate insistence, usually **habitual**;
If you 'will keep your watch half an hour slow it is hardly surprising that you are late for your appointments. **would** is used in the past:
We all tried to stop him smoking in bed but he 'would do it. **will** and **would** are not contracted here and are strongly stressed,
- C **would** can express a characteristic action, usually one which annoys the speaker:
Bill objects/objected. — He 'would'./He 'would object! (He always objects.)

231 should/would think + that-clause or so/not (See 347 for so/not used to replace clauses.)

Will it be expensive? - I should/would think so./I should think if would. (= probably 'Yes') or I shouldn't think it would./I shouldn't/wouldn't think so./

I should/would think not. (= probably 'No') By this sort of answer the speaker implies that he doesn't really know but that this is his impression. I should/would think is therefore less confident than I think.

so/not is not usually possible when **should/would think** introduces a comment. A **that-clause** therefore has to be used:

He's an astrologer, looking for work. ~ I shouldn't/wouldn't think that he'd find it easy to get work.

If we are commenting on a past action we use **should/would have thought**:

He actually got a job as an astrologer. ~ I shouldn't/wouldn't have thought that it was possible to do that.

should/would have expected + an infinitive construction or a that-clause is also possible.

The impersonal pronoun **you** can sometimes replace **I**:

She has emigrated. ~ Has she? You'd/I'd have expected her to stay in this country.

232 would for past intention

As has already been noted **would** is the past equivalent of **will** when **will** is used for the ordinary future:

He knows he will be late. He knew he would be late. **would** similarly is the past equivalent of **will** used to express intention ' (see 201):

I said, 'I will help him' =

I said that I would help him.

He said, '! won't lend you a penny' =

He said that he wouldn't lend me a penny. But notice that *whereas* would be used for future or intention is restricted to subordinate clauses as in the above examples, *wouldn't* used for negative intention can stand alone:
 He won't help me today. (He refuses to help.)
 He wouldn't help me yesterday. (He refused to help.) *would* cannot be used in this way. So to put a sentence such as / will help him today into the past, we have to replace *will* by another verb:
 I wanted/intended/offered to help him yesterday.

233 shall I/we? in requests for orders or advice, offers, suggestions

Requests for orders:
 How shall I cook it? Where shall we put this? When the request is for advice only we use either *shall* or *should*:
 Which one shall I buy? or Which one should I buy?
 Offers:
 Shall I wait for you? Shall I help you to Rack?
 Suggestions:
 Shall we meet at the theatre? Let's meet at the- theatre, shall we?
 (See 318 for *shall I/we?* in indirect speech.)

234 shall in the second and third persons

- shall** can express (A) the subject's intention to perform a certain action or to cause it to be performed, and (B) a command. Both these uses are old-fashioned and formal and normally avoided in modern spoken English.
- A Examples of *shall* used to express the speaker's intention:
 You shall have a sweet = I'll give you a sweet or I'll see that you get a sweet. He shan't come here = / won't let him come here. They shall not pass = We won't let them pass. In the past, i.e. in indirect speech, it is usually necessary to change the wording:
 He said, 'You shall have a sweet' = He promised me a sweet.
- B Examples of *shall* used to express a command:
 Yachts shall go round the course, passing the marks in the correct order, (yacht-racing rules)
 Members shall enter the names of their guests in the book provided.
 (club rules)
 This construction is chiefly used in regulations or legal documents. In less formal English *must* or *are to* would be used instead of *shall* in the above sentences. (See also 282.)
- C **shall you?** is an old-fashioned form which is occasionally still found in some novels possibly because it is shorter and neater than the future continuous tense:
 Shall you go? = Will you be going?

235 that. . . should after certain verbs

Certain verbs can be followed by **that** + subject + **should** as an alternative to a gerund or infinitive construction.
that. . . should is particularly useful in the passive and sometimes is the only possible passive form.
that. . . should is more formal than a gerund or infinitive construction and usually implies less direct contact between the advisers/organizers etc. and the people who are to carry out the action. Verbs which can be used with *that. . . should* include the following:
 advise, agree, arrange, ask, beg, command, decide, demand, determine, insist, order, propose, recommend, request, stipulate, suggest, urge. Note also: be anxious, be determined.
 She advised that we should keep the gate locked.
 She advised that the gate should be kept locked.
 She advised keeping the gate locked/advised us to keep it locked.

(See 267.)

recommend could be used above instead of advise and would sound more formal -

They agreed/decided that the roof should be repaired. They agreed/decided to repair the roof.

He arranged that I should go abroad.

He arranged/or me to go abroad.

They arranged that the minister should be met at the airport.

They arranged/or the minister to be met at the airport.

be anxious (= wish: see 27 C) takes the same construction as arrange:

He is anxious that classes should start/should he started at once. He is anxious/or classes to start/to be started at once.

They asked/begged/urged that relief work should be given priority. They asked/begged/urged the authorities to give relief work priority. (See 243.)

He commanded that the army should advance. (He was not necessarily with the army.)

He commanded the army to advance. (He probably was with the army.)

She determined/was determined that he should study music. She determined/was determined to let him/make him study music. She insisted that he should study music/insisted on his studying music. (See 262.)

He ordered that Ann should go. (He probably told someone else to tell her.)

He ordered Ann to go. (He probably told her himself.) (See 320.)

He ordered that the goods should be sent by air.

He ordered the goods to be sent by air.

He proposed/suggested that we should try homeopathic remedies. (See 289.)

He proposed/suggested that homeopathic remedies should be tried. i. He proposed/suggested (our) trying homeopathic remedies.

They stipulated that the best materials should be used. They stipulated/or the best materials So be used.

should is sometimes omitted before be. (See 291 C.)

236 it is/was + adjective + that . . . should

- A that . . . should can be used after if is/was advisable, better, desirable, essential, imperative, important, natural, necessary; after fair (.= just), just, right (these are often preceded by only) and after reasonable, as an alternative to a for+ infinitive construction:

It is advisable that everyone should have a map.

It is better for him to hear it from you.

It is better that he should hear it from you.

It is essential for him to be prepared for this.

It is essential that he should be prepared for this.

It is only right that she should have a share. should is sometimes omitted before be:

It is essential that he be prepared.

- B that . . . should can be used after it is/was absurd, amazing, annoying, ludicrous, odd, ridiculous, strange, surprising and similar adjectives as an alternative to that + present/past tense:

It is ridiculous that we should be (= that we are) short of water in a country where it is always raining. The perfect infinitive is sometimes used when referring to past events:

It is amazing that she should have said (= that she said) nothing about the murder.

237 Other uses of should

A After can't think why/don't know why/see no reason why etc. when the speaker queries the reasonableness or justice of an assumption:

I don't know why you should think that I did it. I see no reason why you should interfere in their quarrel.

The perfect infinitive is usual when the assumption was in the past:

I can't think why he should have said that it was my fault.

B Idiomatically with what, where, who in dramatic expressions of surprise:

What should J find but an enormous spider? Quite often the surprise is embarrassing:

Who should come in but his first wife!

C After lest and sometimes after in case:

1 In literary English lest . . . should is sometimes placed after expressions of fear or anxiety;

He was terrified lest he should slip w the icy rocks. should •+• perfect infinitive is used when the anxiety concerns a previous action:

She began to be worried lest he should have met with some accident.

lest can also be used in purpose clauses to mean 'for fear that':

He dared not spend the money lest someone should ask where he had got it.

As above, this is a literary form.

in case, which is more usual than lest here, can be followed by should or by an ordinary present or past tense:

in case someone should ask/someone asked (See also 227, 337.)

should is sometimes used in purpose clauses as an alternative to would/could:

He wore a mask so that no one should recognize him. (See 336.)

In conditional sentences instead of the present tense:

If the pain should return take another of these pills. (See 224.)

In indirect, rather formal, commands when the recipient of the command is not necessarily addressed directly:

He ordered that Tom should leave the house. (See 321 B.) Compare with He ordered Tom to leave which implies that he told Tom himself.