



**Remember to watch the video first!** Then read the conversation between Sophie and Lucia, a student. Sophie met in Brazil. Sophie is helping Lucia understand how to use the verb *to be* in the present and past.



**Grammar  
Snacks**

The form of the verb *to be* is *am* (contracted to *'m*), *is* (*'s*) and *are* (*'re*) in the present tense and *was/were* in the past. *To be* is used as an auxiliary verb, to form continuous tenses and the passive, and as a main verb. Here we are looking at it as a main verb.

After the verb *to be* we use an adjective phrase, a noun phrase, a preposition phrase or an adverb phrase.



**Lucia**

Oh, wow! That sounds complicated.

No, don't worry. I'm going to give you lots of examples. Here are some examples with adjectives or adjective phrases:

*I'm a bit tired.*  
*He was late last time too.*  
*The journey was fantastic.*  
*My brother isn't very tall.*

Here are examples with nouns or noun phrases:

*She was an English teacher for years.*  
*They're both teachers at our school.*  
*That's my laptop.*

And here are examples with adverb and preposition phrases:

*I'm here at the café, and you're not!*  
*Are you there yet?*  
*Your phone's in my bag.*  
*Where were you at 5 o'clock?*



**Sophie**

So you use contractions (*I'm*, *you're*, *he's*, etc.) in the present. Can you use contractions in the past?

No, we don't contract *was* or *were*.

*I was just like you when your Dad and I were together.*





What about forming questions and negatives?

They are quite easy. For questions, you just change the order of the subject and the verb. Sometimes you need to add a question word.

*Is he in his room?*  
*Where **are** you?*  
*What **was** that noise?*

For negatives, you just add *not*. If you're speaking, don't forget to use a contraction.

*We **aren't** ready yet.*  
*Is Daisy at home? ~ No, she **isn't**.*  
*Those books **weren't** on the table. I don't know where they are.*



I think I've heard a different type of contraction. Like *We're not ready yet*.

Yes, that's also possible. Also:

*Is Daisy at home? ~ No, **she's not**.*

But there's only one form of the first person negative:

*I'm **not** interested in football.*

And there's only one way to contract the past negative form:

*She **wasn't** always a writer.*  
*There **weren't** any peppers in the supermarket.*



*To be* is used in a lot of everyday questions, isn't it? Can you give me some more examples?

OK, in this table there are some common areas where we use *to be*.

<b>Age</b>	<i>How old are you?</i>	<i>I'm 18.</i>
<b>Place</b>	<i>Where are you from?</i>	<i>I'm from Beijing.</i>
<b>Nationality</b>	<i>What's your nationality?</i>	<i>I'm Brazilian.</i>
<b>Health</b>	<i>How are you?</i>	<i>I'm very well, thanks.</i>
<b>People</b>	<i>What's she like?</i>	<i>She's very nice.</i>
<b>Prices</b>	<i>How much is it?</i>	<i>It's £3.50</i>





What about *Where were you born?* ~ *I was born in London.* Isn't that with *to be*?

Yes, but that's a passive. We'll look at passives another day.

'To be or not to be.'

And that's Shakespeare. We'll look at Shakespeare another day too!



Watch the video on our website!

