

Be, Being, Or Been?

BE

Be is the base form of the verb. Use be after “to.” Here are some verbs in English that are often followed by “to”:

- hope - I hope to be as wise as my father someday.
- Learn - She’s learning to be less concerned about other peoples’ opinions.
- Need - You need to be ready to leave by 6:30.
- plan - We’re planning to be in London from the 18th to the 23rd.
- Pretend - My kids are pretending to be superheroes.
- Promise - I promise to be on time for the meeting.
- Try - He said he’d try to be more patient.
- Want - I want to be fluent in English.
- would like - I’d like to be a pilot – it seems like an exciting job.

Also use be after should, could, and would:

- You should be ashamed.
- This could be interesting.
- I would be happy to help.

BEING

Being is the continuous form of the verb. You can use it after: am / is / are (present continuous); was / were (past continuous)

Examples:

- We can’t access the internet right now because the network is being restarted.
- When I said that dress doesn’t look good on you, I was just being honest.
- You can also use being after these verbs:

avoid

enjoy

can’t stand

don’t mind

look forward to

practice

spend time

stop

Examples:

- Stop being lazy and help me wash the dishes.
- I enjoy being in a position of leadership.
- She can’t stand being lied to.

Always use being (not be or been) after prepositions:

- I was in the hospital for a month after being in a car accident.
- That’s the problem with being late all the time – people stop trusting you.
- The best part of being a teacher is interacting with the students.
- She got an award for being the best salesperson in the company.

BEEN

Been is the past participle. Use it after the verbs have/has (present perfect) and had (past perfect).

Examples:

I’ve been busy lately.

Have you ever been to London?

My car has been stolen.

By the time he showed up, we’d been waiting for an hour.

Use been after could have, should have, and would have:

You should have been on time for your job interview.

The presentation would have been better if we’d done more preparation.

He could have been injured badly when he fell off his motorcycle; he was lucky he didn’t get hurt.