

LESSON 20

Incomplete Verbs

Many idiomatic verbal expressions are constructed from the association of prepositional pronouns with the Assertive Verb. These are classed as incomplete or auxiliary verbs as not all tenses are found.

Group 1: Verbs based on the Assertive Verb

a. Assertive form of the verb + preposition **le**. With the prepositional pronouns these are:

Present Tense

Is toil leam/leat/etc -
I /you/etc like

'S fheàrr leam/leat/etc ‡ -
I /you/etc prefer

Is leamsa/leatsa/etc -
I /you/etc own

Past and Conditional Tenses

Bu toil leam/leat/etc -
I /you/etc liked
I /you/etc would like

B' fheàrr leam/leat/etc -
I /you/etc preferred
I /you/etc would prefer

Bu leamsa/leatsa/etc -
I /you/etc owned
I /you/etc would own

‡ Words beginning with **f** are lenited after **Is**

b. Assertive form of verb + preposition **do**. With the prepositional pronouns these are:

Present Tense

Is còir dhomh/dhut/etc -
I /you/etc are right to

'S urrainn dhomh/dhut/etc -
I /you/etc are able to

'S aithne dhomh/dhut/etc -
I /you/etc know

'S àbhaist dhomh/dhut/etc -
I /you/etc usually

Past and Conditionals Tense

Bu chòir dhomh/dhut/etc -
I /you/etc was/were right to
I /you/etc would be right to/ought to

B' urrainn dhomh/dhut/etc -
I /you was/were able to
I /you would be able to

B' aithne dhomh/dhut/etc -
I /you/etc knew
I /you/etc would know

B' àbhaist dhomh/dhut/etc -
I /you/etc was/were usually
I /you/etc would usually

c. Assertive form of verb + preposition **air**. With the prepositional pronouns these are:

Present Tense

I s beag orm/ort/etc -

I /you/etc dislike

I s lugha orm/ort/etc -

I /you/etc loathe

Past and Conditional Tenses

Bu bheag orm/ort/etc -

I /you/etc disliked

I /you/etc would dislike

Bu lugha orm/ort/etc -

I /you/etc loathed

I /you/etc would loathe

The Other Forms of the Verb

For the present tense drop the **Is** and add:

Cha for negative statements

Chan aithne dhomh e - I don't know him

Chan urrainn dhaibh innse dhut - They are unable to tell you

An for interrogative

An toil leat tì? - Do you like tea? 'S toil - Yes, Cha toil - No

An urrainn dhut innse? - Are you able to tell? 'S urrainn - Yes, Chan urrainn - No

Nach for negative interrogative

Nach toil leat tì? - Don't you like tea? 'S toil - Yes, Cha toil - No
Nach beag ort sin? - Don't you dislike that? I s beag - Yes, Cha bheag - No

For the past and conditional tenses add:

Cha for negative statements

Cha b' urrainn dhomh faicinn - I wasn't able to see?

Cha bu chòir dhut innse - You weren't right to say/You ought not to have said

Am for interrogative

Am bu toil leò tì? - Would they like tea? Bu toil - Yes, Cha bu toil - No

Am b' aithne dhuibh e? - Did you know him? B' aithne - Yes, Cha b' aithne - No

Nach for negative interrogative

Nach bu lugha orra sin? - Didn't they loathe that? Bu lugha - Yes, Cha bu lugha - No
Nach b' àbhaist dhaibh innse? - Wouldn't they usually say? B' àbhaist - Yes, Cha b' àbhaist - No

Examples of Use

When the incomplete verbs are followed directly by a verb, the verbal noun is used. Exceptions in both literature and the spoken language are the verbs **To Be** (a bhith), **To Go** (a dhol) and **To Come** (a thighinn):

An toil leat lagair? - Do you like lager?

Bu toil leam drama - I would like a dram

'S fheàrr leis tì - He prefers tea

B' fheàrr leam cofaidh - I would prefer coffee
 An aithne dhut am fear sin? - Do you know that man?
 B' aithne dhomh an guth - I recognised the voice
 Nach beag oirbh e? - Don't you dislike him?
 Cha bu bheag orm i - I didn't dislike her
 An toil leat seinn? - Do you like singing?
 'S urrainn dhaibh leughadh - They are able to read
 B' fheàrr leam cluiche - I would prefer to play
 Is lugha air ball-coise - He detests football
 'S àbhaist dhaibh a thighinn tràth - They usually come early
 B' àbhaist dha na samhraidhean a bhith blàth - The summers used to be warm
 Is còir dhaibh a bhith cùramach - They are right to be careful
 'S urrainn dhaibh a bhith ann - They are able to be there
 Cha b' urrainn dha a dhol dhan chèilidh - He wasn't able to go to the ceilidh

When incomplete verbs are followed by a verbal noun taking a direct object word order reversal takes place. Here the object comes first followed by **a + lenited verbal noun**. The **a** is dropped before verbal nouns beginning with vowel or beginning with **f + vowel**:

Am bu toil leat ceòl a chluinntinn? - Would you like to hear some music?
 'S fheàrr leam cofaidh òl - I prefer to drink coffee
 Cha bu chòir dhut sin a dhèanamh - You ought not to have done that
 'S urrainn dhomh Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn - I am able to speak Gàidhlig
 Am b' urrainn do Mhàiri an dealbh fhaicinn? - Was Màiri able to see the film?
 Am bu toil leat an litir sin a fhreagairt? - Would you like to answer that letter?

When the object of the sentence is a pronoun then the pronoun is replaced by its possessive adjective placed before the verbal noun. The possessive adjectives **mo**, **do** and **a** (his/its) lenite the following word whenever possible:

Cha bu toil leis m' fhaicinn? - He would not like to see me?
 B' fheàrr leis d' fhaicinn? - He would prefer to see you?
 An urrainn dhì a thogail? - Can she lift him?
 Bu chòir dhaibh a dèanamh - They ought to do it (work = feminine)

As mentioned in Lesson 19 the practise is to contract **Is** to **'S** in both literature and the spoken language, particularly before words beginning with a vowel or **fh**. **Bu** is always contracted to **B'** before words beginning with a vowel or **fh**.

NEW WORDS

Adjectives

cùramach - careful

fadalach - late (in arriving)

eile - other

sam bith - any

Adverbs

air neo - (or) else

roimhe seo - by now

Nouns

càl (m) - cabbage

guth (m) - voice

maighistir-sgoile (m) - schoolmaster

taigh-dhealbh (m) - cinema

siùcar (m) - sugar

cabhag (f) - haste

dùthaich (f) - country, countryside

tè (f) - one, female

duine (m) - person (any sex), man, husband

làn-spàin (m) - spoonful

pàrant (m) - parent

samhradh (m) - summer

tì (m) - tea

coinneamh (f) - meeting

spàin (f) - spoon

tèile (f) - other female (from: tè + eile)

Verbal phrases

Tha cabhag orm - I am in a hurry

Tha cabhag ort - You are in a hurry

Tha cabhag air - He is in a hurry

Tha cabhag oirre - She is in a hurry

Tha cabhag oirnn - We are in a hurry

Tha cabhag oirbh - You are in a hurry

Tha cabhag orra - They are in a hurry

EXERCISE 1 Translate into English

1. Tha i ag ràdh gu bheil pathadh oirre
2. Am bu toil leò a dhol dhan taigh-dhealbh?
3. Chan àbhaist dhaibh a dhol dhan taigh-sheinnse
4. An aithne dhuibh an duine sin? Chan aithne ach 's aithne dhomh an duine eile
5. Cha robh fios agam gum b' aithne dhì iad
6. 'S àbhaist dhì a bhith a' coiseachd tràth anns a' mhadainn
7. Nach bu chòir dha a bhith a' dol dhan dotair? Bu chòir
8. Is toil leam an nighean seo ach is beag orm an tèile
9. An urrainn dhut Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn? 'S urrainn
10. Am b' fheàrr leis a' bhalach a bhith a-muigh? Cha b' fheàrr
11. Tha mi a' smaointinn gur beag air snàmh
12. Tha i ag ràdh gur lugha oirre càl

EXERCISE 2 Translate into Gàidhlig

1. Do you like this house? No
2. I would prefer a small house in (air) the country
3. The nurse usually comes at mid-day
4. Does the dog like playing in the park? Yes
5. We can't come to see you tomorrow
6. I ought to hurry else I'll be late
7. Would you prefer sugar in your tea? Yes
8. He would like an other spoonful of sugar please
9. Did you know anyone (a person) at the meeting last night? No
10. My parents are usually home by now
11. Are you able to see the paper? No
12. Were you able to answer the question? Yes

LESSON 20: ANSWERS 1

1. She says she is thirsty

2. Would they like to go to the cinema?

3. They don't usually go to the pub

4. Do you know that man? No, but I know the other one

5. I didn't know that she knew them

6. She usually walks early in the morning

7. Ought not he go to the doctor? Yes

8. I like this girl but I dislike the other one

9. Can you speak Gàidhlig? Yes

10. Would the boy prefer to be outside? No

11. I think that he dislikes swimming

12. She says that she dislikes cabbage

LESSON 20: ANSWERS 2

1. An toil leat an taigh seo? Cha toil

2. B' fheàrr leam taigh beag air an Dùthaich

3. 'S abhaist dhan bhanaltram a thighinn aig meadhan-là

4. An toil leis a' chù a bhith a' cluich anns a' phàirc?

'S toil

5. Chan urrainn dhùinn a thighinn gad fhàicinn a-màireach

6. Bu chòir cabhag a bhith orm air neo bidh mi fadalach

7. Am b' fheàrr leibh sìucar nur tì? B' fheàrr

8. Bu toil leis Ian-spàin eile de shìucar mas e ur toil e

9. Am b' aithne dhut duine aig a' choinneimh a-raoir?

Cha b' aithne

10. 'S abhaist do mo phàrantan a bhith aig an taigh roimhe seo

11. An urrainn dhut am pàipear fhàicinn? Chan urrainn

12. Am b' urrainn dhut a' cheist a fhreagairt? B' urrainn