

Verbs

Verbs are important because they tell you what's happening in a sentence. In fact, if it doesn't have a verb, it's not a sentence at all. All the more reason to learn these pages...

Verbs are doing or being words

Verbs are action words — they show what a person or thing is doing or being.

Sentences can have more than one verb. See p.8 for more.



I am an artist.

The girl talks loudly.

They wear funny clothes.

Arun is building a rocket.

Whoever's doing the verb in a sentence is the subject.

It's different for passive sentences though. See p.9.

The girl talks loudly.

'The girl' is the subject.

Arun is building a rocket.

'Arun' is the subject.



The subject and the verb have to agree

Verbs change depending on who's doing the action.

I look confused.

It looks confused.

Most verbs stay the same if 'I', 'you', 'we' or 'they' are doing the action, but they change for 'he', 'she' and 'it'.

She sells seashells.

They sell seashells.



He tries the strange sandwiches.

We try the strange sandwiches.

Verbs

Verb tenses tell you if an action takes place in the past, the present or the future.

Verb tenses tell you when

- 1) The tense of a verb tells you when something happens. The verb changes in the different tenses.

I talked.

You can often add -ed to the verb to make it past tense. (See p.53).

I talk.

This is the present tense.

I will talk.

You can put 'will' in front of the verb to make the future tense.

- 2) The past tense can be tricky to form. Not all verbs follow the 'add -ed' rule. Take these, for example:



Present	go	eat	take	do	have	see	think	speak	come
Past	went	ate	took	did	had	saw	thought	spoke	came

- 3) It's really important that you use the right tense in your writing. If you start writing about something in the past tense, then make sure you carry on writing in the past tense.

Use 'to be' with -ing verbs

- 1) To show an action is currently happening, you use the present progressive form. This is made using part of the verb 'to be' (see p.24) and an -ing verb. The verb 'to be' is a helping verb. It tells you more about the -ing verb.

We are flying to Mars.

The part of 'to be' ('are') is in the present tense. This means that the -ing verb is happening right now.

The -ing part tells you what the action is.



- 2) You can also use 'to be' in the past tense to make the past progressive form.

We were flying to Mars.

'Were' is the helping verb. It's in the past tense. This means the action was happening in the past.

Quick Questions...

Copy out these sentences and correct the verbs so that they agree with the subject.

- The dog eat my homework.
- They wants ice cream for pudding.
- You is doing the washing up tonight.
- I often thinks before I speaks.

Verbs

You know those 'helping' verbs you read about on p.7? Here are some more of them. They're really important. Some sentences won't even make sense if you don't use them.

You can use 'have' to make the perfect form

- 1) To talk about things that have already happened, you can use the present tense of 'have'.

This is the present perfect form.

I have finished the book.

For more about 'been' and 'done' with 'have', see p.25.

In this sentence, 'have' is the helping verb.

The writer has already read the book. This verb is in the past tense.

- 2) To talk about something that happened before something else, you can use the past tense of 'have'.

We had done our homework, so the lesson was easy.

This is the past perfect form.

This helping verb is different — it's in the past tense.

By the time of the lesson, the children had already done their homework.

- 3) The part after 'had' or 'have' is often the same as the normal past tense, but not always. You just need to learn the ones that are different.

He has spoke to the class. X

This should be 'spoken'.

You have ate the apple. X

This should be 'eaten'.

Some helping verbs show possibility

Words like 'should' and 'would' are called modal verbs. They can show how likely an action is.

We could sing at your party.

'Could' is the modal verb.

'Sing' is the main verb. This is the bit of the verb you'd find in the dictionary.

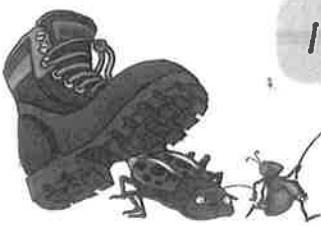


I might borrow her stilts.

'Might' is the modal verb.

You should bring your bug collection.

'Should' is the modal verb.



Verbs

Active and passive verbs are two ways of giving the same information. Study this page until you can tell one from the other — like a grammatical 'spot the difference'.

Active sentences focus on who

Most sentences are in the active voice — it's clear who is doing the action (the subject). The verb agrees with the person doing the action (see p.6).



Prajesh flipped the pancake.

Prajesh is doing the action. He's the subject.

The pancake is having the action done to it. It's the object.



Kev and Don built the house five years ago.

Kev and Don are the subjects.

The house (the object) is having the action done to it.

Passive sentences focus on what

When a sentence is in the passive voice, something is done to the subject.

EXAMPLES

The pancake was flipped by Prajesh.

the subject

The word 'by' can introduce who does the action.



The house was built by Kev and Don five years ago.

the subject

You don't always need to say who does the action in passive sentences. 'The house was built five years ago' makes sense too.

Quick Questions...

Decide whether each sentence below is active or passive.

- 1) My neighbours threw a massive party.
- 2) The soup was served in teapots.
- 3) The puppy was left by the side of the road.
- 4) The painting was done by her sister.



Verbs

Verbs are doing or being words — after these exercises, you'll be using them like an expert.

1. Circle all the verbs below.

swims spinach grinning cardboard sang discover
shirt write speaker has angrily were nervous

2. Underline the verbs in these sentences.

Poor Ikram tripped over the cat and fell flat on her face.

They enjoyed the concert, but it lasted too long.

When Jakub showed me his pet tarantula, I fainted.

Liliana likes gravy on her chips, but I prefer curry sauce.

3. Cross out the incorrect form of the verb in the sentences below.

Matilda (**tells** / **tell**) jokes all the time.

I never (**do** / **does**) chores at home.

Ed and Ali (**has** / **have**) the same birthday.

They (**shares** / **share**) it with me.

Lara (**saves** / **save**) her crisp packets.

My sister (**eats** / **eat**) cold baked beans.

4. Rewrite this sentence so it is about yourself.

He likes to read horror stories even though he is scared of ghosts.

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Verbs

5. Underline the verb in each sentence, and then write who is doing the action on the line.

Mr Smith cooks dinner every night for Mrs Smith.

Mr Smith

At Yanika's party, Olivia danced the most.

Owen threw the boomerang to Rhys.

Akash changed the light bulb for his granny.

Petra's dog always licks her face.

6. Join up the correct parts of the sentences so that they make sense.

Spencer	bakes great cakes,	as he crossed the finish line.
Aunty Liz	missed their bus,	and she always saves me some.
Claire and I	waved his arms	so we could raise some money.
Jo and Sam	sold our old stuff	so they had to walk to school.

7. Write a sentence using the verbs and people given below.

to swim

Tamara and Chris

to eat

Priti and I



Verbs

8. Underline the modal verb in each sentence.

Anne might not be in school tomorrow because she's feeling ill.

If only he would answer his phone!

We could be there before 8 o'clock if that is convenient.

Peter will know what to do with the two-legged cat.

I shall let you know what we are going to do.

9. Circle the event in the box below which is most likely to happen.

Giorgio will feed the pigs later.

Dave should arrive soon.

We could go to the cinema now.

Gwen might knit a scarf tomorrow.

10. Rewrite each sentence using the correct form of the verb in brackets.

Anitchka wondered when her lost poodle (**will / would / shall**) come home.

11. In the boxes below, write whether the modal verb in each sentence shows **certainty** (C) or **possibility** (P).

a. He will eat everything.

☐

c. You must be hungry.

☐

b. I may go skiing later.

☐

d. We might hate it.

☐

*So, my friend, how did you do with your doing words?
Tick the box to show how well you did.*

