

# 1. VERBS

To express a complete thought, you need a subject and a verb.  
The verb might express an action performed by the subject:

She *erased* the blackboard carefully.  
The children *are building* a snow fort.  
We *slept* until noon.  
My mother *will be working* all day tomorrow.

Or, the verb might show only that something exists, or is in a certain state of being or condition:

My favorite artist *is* Picasso.  
His answer *was* wrong.  
We *became* nervous.

## TYPES OF VERBS

There are three types of verbs which you should know.

- Difference* (1)
- Transitive:** A transitive verb shows action and is followed by a direct object.  
We *discovered* a hidden treasure.  
My aunt *sent* me a birthday card.  
Someone *has borrowed* my cleats.
  - Intransitive:** An intransitive verb also shows action but is not followed by a direct object.  
The cat *purred*.  
My hat *fell* into the water.  
Mount Etna *has not erupted* recently.
  - Linking:** A linking verb is not followed by a direct object, but it is followed by a predicate nominative (a noun, or a pronoun in the nominative case) or a predicate adjective. A predicate nominative or a predicate adjective is sometimes called a **subject complement**, because it *completes* what the verb has said about the subject.

David *is* my best friend.  
I knew the winner *would be* he who had the best pit crew.  
They *grew restless* listening to the long speech.

See Chapter 7, "Pronouns," for a complete discussion of pronoun case.  
Here are the common linking verbs.

### Forms of *to be*:

*is, am, are*  
*was, were*  
*will be, shall be*  
*could be, should be*  
*might have been*

Name 4

- 2 Verbs of the senses: *look, feel, sound, taste, smell*  
Other linking verbs: *appear, seem, become, remain, grow, turn, prove*

Here are some sentences which show the different kinds of subject complements.

**Linking verb followed by predicate noun:**

David *is* our new neighbor.  
She *must be* a teacher.  
You *should have been* a football player.  
He *became* a minister at the age of fifty-three.

**Linking verb followed by pronoun in the nominative case (after forms of *to be*):**

Was it *she* who called last night?  
The real thieves *were they* whom they had hired to guard the money.

**Linking verb followed by adjective:**

The milk *tasted sour*.  
You *seem unhappy*.  
I *feel bad* that I can't come to your party.

Do not be confused by verbs that look the same but have different functions, depending on their meaning in the sentence:

He <i>smelled</i> the roses.	(transitive)	I <i>turned</i> the steering wheel.	(transitive)
The roses <i>smelled</i> lovely.	(linking)	I <i>turned</i> red.	(linking)
		I <i>turned</i> into the driveway.	(intransitive)

To prepare for the first two exercises, study the simple sentences below and review the basics:

- Transitive takes a direct object.
- Intransitive doesn't.
- Linking takes a predicate noun, a predicate adjective, or a pronoun in the nominative case.

**Transitive**

I *bought* an ice cream.  
Rita *erased* her answer.  
They *knew* how to type.  
I *am trying* to fix the lamp.  
She *will inherit* a fortune.

**Intransitive**

He *went* home.  
Dad *sneezed* loudly.  
We *applauded* politely.  
I *will be sitting* nearby.  
You *might be elected*.

**Linking**

They *remained* quiet.  
The information *proved* false.  
He *became* my favorite actor.  
Everyone *must have been* happy.  
*Could* the caller *have been* she?

# VERBS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISE A: types of verbs

Accuracy \_\_\_\_\_ Creativity \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Use the following verbs to create interesting sentences. Make sure that you are using them correctly, as transitive, intransitive, or linking verbs. Also make sure that you are using them as main verbs. Notice that you will be graded on both accuracy and creativity.

**Example:** (write) as a transitive verb

**Incorrect:** I want to write a poem about my cat. (*want* is the main verb)

**Incorrect:** I tried writing a poem about my cat. (*tried* is the main verb)

**Incorrect:** I have written on both sides of the paper. (*have written* is intransitive)

**Correct:** I *have written* a poem about my cat. (*have written* is transitive)

## TRANSITIVE VERBS

1. (locate) \_\_\_\_\_

2. (dig) \_\_\_\_\_

3. (write) \_\_\_\_\_

4. (return) \_\_\_\_\_

5. (maneuver) \_\_\_\_\_

6. (produce) \_\_\_\_\_

7. (buy) \_\_\_\_\_

## INTRANSITIVE VERBS

8. (run) \_\_\_\_\_

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9. (sing) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
10. (battle) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
11. (swim) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
12. (remain) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
13. (hide) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

## LINKING VERBS

14. (remain + predicate noun) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
15. (look + predicate adjective) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
16. (be + predicate noun) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
17. (become + predicate noun) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
18. (taste + predicate adjective) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
19. (be + pronoun in nominative case) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
20. (be + predicate adjective) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

### EXERCISE B: subject complements

**Accuracy** \_\_\_\_\_ **Creativity** \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

2. Most \_\_\_\_\_ (plural noun) \_\_\_\_\_ (linking verb other than to be)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (predicate adjective) when \_\_\_\_\_ (finish the sentence)

3. Tom's new \_\_\_\_\_ than he expected.  
(noun) (any linking verb)  
(predicate adjective)

4. \_\_\_\_\_ tastes as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 (noun)                                 (predicate adjective)

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(finish the sentence)

5. My \_\_\_\_\_ (noun) could never have been a  
\_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_ (predicate noun) (finish the sentence)

6. As soon as \_\_\_\_\_  
(finish the idea)  
my brother became \_\_\_\_\_  
(predicate noun or adjective)

[illegible]

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8. My mother \_\_\_\_\_ happy when I \_\_\_\_\_  
(linking verb, not to be)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(finish the sentence)
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ will be \_\_\_\_\_  
(noun) (pronoun, nominative case)  
who \_\_\_\_\_  
(finish the sentence)
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_  
(noun) (finish the idea)  
\_\_\_\_\_ could not have been \_\_\_\_\_  
(pronoun, nominative case)

## PRINCIPAL PARTS OF THE VERB 3

There are four principal parts of a verb.

1. **Infinitive:** This is the form we get when we put *to* in front of the verb.

Examples: *to type, to change, to receive, to find, to go, to be*

The infinitive form of the verb, using the *to*, will never itself be the main verb of a sentence. Rather, it is the form we use to create the present tense.

Examples: *I type, we change, you receive, you find, they go*

The third person present tense usually just adds *-s* or *-es* to the infinitive.

Examples: *he types, she changes, it receives, she finds, he goes*

The verb *to be* is an important exception to these rules:

	Singular	Plural
First person	<i>I am</i>	<i>we are</i>
Second person	<i>you are</i>	<i>you are</i>
Third person	<i>he, she, it is</i>	<i>they are</i>

We will see in later chapters that the infinitive form of the verb, using the *to*, may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. That is why it is important to know this form of the verb.

2. **Past:** Regular verbs form the past tense by adding *-ed* or *-d* to the infinitive.

Examples: *locked, shattered, walked, dated*

Irregular verbs form the past tense in a variety of ways.

Examples: *find/found break/broke go/went cast/cast be/was, were*

3. **Past participle:** Regular verbs form the past participle by adding *-ed* or *-d* to the infinitive, the same as the past tense.

Examples: *have locked had shattered has walked have dated*

Irregular verbs form the past participle in a variety of ways.

Examples: *have found have broken had gone has cast had been*

4. **Present participle:** This form is made by adding *-ing* to the infinitive.

Examples: *finding, going, wearing, remembering, being*

**Spelling alert:** Note that the addition of the *-ing* to the infinitive may require the addition, deletion, or change of other letters.

Examples: *type/typing begin/beginning die/dying*

## USING THE DICTIONARY

When you look up a verb in the dictionary, you will see the word, then a guide to pronunciation, and then the letters *v*, *v. t.*, or *v. i*. The letter *v* stands for *verb*, the letter *t* stands for *transitive*, and the letter *i* stands for *intransitive*.

You will also see the principal parts of the verb. The infinitive form is used to list the verb in the dictionary. With a regular verb, you will then see the past and the past participle (it is listed only once, since the two forms are the same), and the present participle. With an irregular verb, you will see the past and the past participle listed separately, and the present participle form.

	Infinitive	Past	Past participle	Present participle
<b>Regular verbs:</b>	<i>move</i>	<i>moved</i>	<i>moved</i>	<i>moving</i>
	<i>cook</i>	<i>cooked</i>	<i>cooked</i>	<i>cooking</i>
	<i>waddle</i>	<i>waddled</i>	<i>waddled</i>	<i>waddling</i>
<b>Irregular verbs:</b>	<i>go</i>	<i>went</i>	<i>gone</i>	<i>going</i>
	<i>break</i>	<i>broke</i>	<i>broken</i>	<i>breaking</i>
	<i>cast</i>	<i>cast</i>	<i>cast</i>	<i>casting</i>

## TENSES OF THE VERB

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There are three simple tenses, **present**, **past**, and **future**. Within each of those time slots there may be an action which is still in progress (the present, past, or future **progressive**) or which has recently been finished or "perfected" (the present, past, or future **perfect**). Or, some of the action has been finished but some continues (the present, past, or future **perfect progressive**). The following examples illustrate these tenses.

	Simple	Progressive	Perfect	Perfect Progressive
<b>Present</b>	<i>I find</i>	<i>I am finding</i>	<i>I have found</i>	<i>I have been finding</i>
<b>Past</b>	<i>I found</i>	<i>I was finding</i>	<i>I had found</i>	<i>I had been finding</i>
<b>Future</b>	<i>I will find</i>	<i>I will be finding</i>	<i>I will have found</i>	<i>I will have been finding</i>

So, in which tenses is the present participle of *to find* used? \_\_\_\_\_

And the past participle of *to find*? \_\_\_\_\_

And the past participle of *to be*? \_\_\_\_\_



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## EXERCISE C: principal parts of verbs

Accuracy \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Look up the following verbs in a dictionary and determine their principal parts. Fill in the blanks with those correct forms. Notice that some have more than one possible form. You will be graded only on accuracy.

Infinitive	Past	Past participle	Present participle
be			
bear			
burst			
choose			
dive			
fly			
have			
lay			
lead			
lend			
lie (recline)			
lie (speak falsely)			
rise			
set			
shine			
shrink			
sink			
sit			
swim			
swing			

EXERCISE D: tenses of verbs

Accuracy \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Using the principal parts from Exercise C, fill in the blanks below with the indicated tenses of the given verbs.

**Simple present**

It \_\_\_\_\_  
(be)

She \_\_\_\_\_  
(choose)

You \_\_\_\_\_  
(sit)

**Simple past**

She \_\_\_\_\_  
(burst)

Everyone \_\_\_\_\_  
(have)

He \_\_\_\_\_  
(lead)

**Simple future**

They \_\_\_\_\_  
(be)

We \_\_\_\_\_  
(choose)

I \_\_\_\_\_  
(rise)

**Present progressive**

We \_\_\_\_\_  
(bear)

They \_\_\_\_\_  
(lie—recline)

It \_\_\_\_\_  
(sit)

**Past progressive**

Few \_\_\_\_\_  
(be)

He \_\_\_\_\_  
(have)

They \_\_\_\_\_  
(lead)

**Future progressive**

You \_\_\_\_\_  
(fly)

Both \_\_\_\_\_  
(lay)

I \_\_\_\_\_  
(lie—recline)

**Present perfect**

You \_\_\_\_\_  
(be)

He \_\_\_\_\_  
(bear)

I \_\_\_\_\_  
(lie—recline)

**Past perfect**

We \_\_\_\_\_  
(fly)

It \_\_\_\_\_  
(have)

Several \_\_\_\_\_  
(lie—speak falsely)

**Future perfect**

It \_\_\_\_\_  
(burst)

I \_\_\_\_\_  
(lay)

Many \_\_\_\_\_  
(shrink)

**Present perfect progressive**

We \_\_\_\_\_  
(have)

The hen \_\_\_\_\_  
(lay)

She \_\_\_\_\_  
(lie—speak falsely)

**Past perfect progressive**

They \_\_\_\_\_  
(bear)

We \_\_\_\_\_  
(lie—recline)

It \_\_\_\_\_  
(rise)

**Future perfect progressive**

Many \_\_\_\_\_  
(choose)

Few \_\_\_\_\_  
(fly)

Both \_\_\_\_\_  
(have)

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## EXERCISE E: verb tenses in writing

Accuracy \_\_\_\_\_ Creativity \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Write a sentence for each verb given, using it as the **main verb** of the sentence, in the indicated tense. Notice that you will be graded on both accuracy and creativity.

1. (be) \_\_\_\_\_  
(present progressive)

2. (burst) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past progressive)

3. (sit) \_\_\_\_\_  
(future progressive)

4. (lie—speak falsely) \_\_\_\_\_  
(present perfect progressive)

5. (fly) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past perfect progressive)

6. (rise) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past)

7. (set) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past)

8. (have) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past perfect)

9. (lead) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past)

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10. (choose) \_\_\_\_\_  
(future perfect)

\_\_\_\_\_

11. (lie—recline) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past perfect)

\_\_\_\_\_

12. (lay) \_\_\_\_\_  
(future perfect progressive)

\_\_\_\_\_

13. (shrink) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past perfect)

\_\_\_\_\_

14. (bear) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past perfect)

\_\_\_\_\_

15. (swim) \_\_\_\_\_  
(future perfect)

\_\_\_\_\_

16. (dive) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past)

\_\_\_\_\_

17. (swing) \_\_\_\_\_  
(future perfect progressive)

\_\_\_\_\_

18. (sink) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past perfect)

\_\_\_\_\_

19. (lend) \_\_\_\_\_  
(past)

\_\_\_\_\_

20. (shine) \_\_\_\_\_  
(present perfect)

\_\_\_\_\_

## HELPING VERBS

In the three exercises you have done so far, you have been writing sentences that have explored the various principal parts of verbs. In order to write those sentences, you had to use other verbs to get the main verb into the tense that you wanted. Such verbs are called helping verbs, and there are five different kinds.

5

Name  
all

<b>Forms of to be:</b>	<i>am, is, are, was, were, be, been, being</i>
<b>Forms of to do:</b>	<i>do, does, did</i>
<b>Forms of to have:</b>	<i>has, have, had</i>
<b>Modals:</b>	<i>could, would, should, will, might, may, must, shall, can</i>
<b>Helping phrases:</b>	<i>has to, have to, had to, used to, (be) going to, ought to</i>

Helping verbs may be used with any principal part of a verb except the past tense. A main verb may have up to four helping verbs to put it into a particular tense. Here is how the helping verbs may be used with the verb *to take*, using the subject *They*.

### take

They *take*.  
They *do take*.  
They *could take*.  
They *used to take*.

### taking

They *are taking*.  
They *could be taking*.  
They *have been taking*.  
They *could have been taking*.  
They *used to be taking*.

### taken

They *are taken*.  
They *have taken*.  
They *could have taken*.  
They *could be taken*.  
They *have been taken*.  
They *are being taken*.  
They *used to be taken*.  
They *could have been taken*.  
They *could have been being taken*. (rare)

## VERB ISSUES

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**Eternal truths:** The present tense is often used to express an eternal truth, a fact or idea which was, is, and always will be true. Even though the main verb of the sentence might be in the past tense, express the eternal truth in the present tense.

He knew that honesty *is* the best policy, but he continued to lie.  
Benjamin Franklin demonstrated that lightning *is* electricity.

Diff  
?

**Voice:** A sentence is in the **active voice** when the subject is doing the action of the verb. A sentence is in the **passive voice** when the action of the verb is being done to the subject.

All the verbs in the "Tenses of the Verb" chart on page 8 were in the active voice. The passive voice is constructed by using the past participle form of the verb, along with a form of *to be*, and sometimes one or more other helpers. (Notice that the sentence you just read was in the passive voice!)

The passive voice is also useful when we don't know or don't want to reveal who or what did the verb.

It *was reported* that...  
The window *must have been broken* when...

For most writing, though, you should write in the active voice for the most clarity and vitality.

**Mood:** There are three moods of the verb in English.

8 The **indicative mood** is the most common, as these verbs "indicate" what is happening in the world around us. That is the kind we have been studying so far.

9 The **imperative mood** is used to express a request or a command. It is simply the infinitive form of the verb, without the *to*.

*Watch* me blow a bubble.

*Give* me a hand.

*Take off* your hat.

*Be* here on time.

10 The **subjunctive mood** is used to express a situation or condition contrary to fact, or to express a wish or a hypothesis. There are two ways to form the subjunctive. Sometimes we use the infinitive form of the verb instead of the usual indicative form.

I asked that *I be* allowed to speak first.

(not *I am*)

The doctor recommended that *she go* on a vacation.

(not *she goes*)

The other way to form the subjunctive is to change the verb *was* to *were*. This is usually done in a clause beginning with *as*, *as if*, or *as though*, or in a wish.

He yelled as if *he were* being murdered.

(not *he was*)

I wish *I were* ten years younger.

(not *I was*)

Be cautious with the subjunctive. Remember that these situations are contrary to fact, theoretical, imaginary. He *was not* being murdered. I *am not* ten years younger.

However, sometimes you are dealing with a situation that might be true. The subjunctive mood is inappropriate in these cases.

It looks as if *he is* going to lose.

(he probably will)

If *she was* here, she left no trace behind.

(maybe she was)

**Sequence:** The **perfect tenses** and the **perfect progressive tenses** deserve special attention.

When you are referring to two events, and one precedes the other, you must express the time sequence properly. Use the perfect or the perfect progressive tense for the earlier event.

**Incorrect:** If I *did* my homework, I would not have failed.

**Correct:** If I *had done* my homework, I would not have failed.

**Incorrect:** I *waited* two hours before you arrived.

**Correct:** I *had waited* two hours before you arrived.

**Correct:** I *had been waiting* two hours before you arrived.

**Incorrect:** She told the doctor *she had* the problem for over a year.

**Correct:** She told the doctor *she had had* the problem for over a year.

**Correct:** She told the doctor *she had been having* the problem for over a year.

**Incorrect:** She will tell the doctor *she had* the problem for over a year.

**Correct:** She will tell the doctor *she has had* the problem for over a year.

**Correct:** She will tell the doctor *she has been having* the problem for over a year.



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## EXERCISE F: verbs and their helpers

Accuracy \_\_\_\_\_ Creativity \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Fill in the blanks below with verbs as labeled, one main verb or helper in each space.

1. My little brother \_\_\_\_\_ sick on the merry-go-round.  
(linking verb)
2. I \_\_\_\_\_ an honor student  
(helper) (helper) (linking verb, not to be)  
if I had just tried a little harder.
3. His priceless Rembrandt painting \_\_\_\_\_ last night.  
(helper) (past participle)
4. By the time I learn my lines for the audition, the cast members for the play  
\_\_\_\_\_ already \_\_\_\_\_  
(helper) (helper) (helper) (past participle)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ he \_\_\_\_\_ the magnitude of the problem?  
(helper) (transitive verb)
6. The teachers \_\_\_\_\_ every morning at ten o'clock.  
(intransitive verb)
7. This morning the three golden retriever puppies \_\_\_\_\_ in the back yard.  
(intransitive verb)
8. "The prisoner \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_  
(helper) (helper) (helper) (present participle)  
on the night of the crime," the lawyer explained.
9. When we arrived at the scene of the accident, the driver \_\_\_\_\_ hardly  
(helper)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(present participle)
10. Tomorrow we \_\_\_\_\_ if we are lucky.  
(helper) (helper) (past participle)
11. \_\_\_\_\_ everyone \_\_\_\_\_ in the geometry course?  
(helper) (present participle)
12. I knew by the voice that it \_\_\_\_\_ she.  
(helper) (helper) (linking verb)
13. Without your help, we never \_\_\_\_\_ him.  
(helper) (helper) (past participle)
14. The finalists \_\_\_\_\_ they who have won at least seven games.  
(helper) (linking verb)
15. It \_\_\_\_\_ always \_\_\_\_\_ that way.  
(helper) (helper) (past participle)

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16. From now on it \_\_\_\_\_ always \_\_\_\_\_ this way.  

(helper) (helper) (past participle)
17. The finished product \_\_\_\_\_ better than I had expected.  

(linking verb, not to be)
18. Last Saturday three of my friends \_\_\_\_\_ until I \_\_\_\_\_  

(intransitive verb) (helper)

\_\_\_\_\_ them to leave.  

(transitive verb)
19. My boss \_\_\_\_\_ nervous as the deadline approached.  

(linking, not to be)
20. My suggestion \_\_\_\_\_ by now.  

(helper) (helper) (helper) (intransitive verb)

EXERCISE G: reading for verbs

Accuracy \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Now read in a good book, and pay attention to the verbs. Try to find verb phrases that are more than one word long. See if you can locate some verbs in the imperative or subjunctive mood —mysteries are good for that! Write just the simple subjects and the verb phrases in the spaces below, and tell the name of the book and the author.

Simple subject	Verb phrase
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Book title and author: \_\_\_\_\_