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# VERBS

A **verb** is a word used to indicate an action or state of being. The **verb** of a sentence indicates an action of body or mind, a state of being, or an occurrence. The verb can change form to show time (tense), person, and number. Each verb needs to agree in number and person with its subject.

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| **Examples:** | *Action****:*** David **spoke** quickly. |
|  | *State of being****:*** David **seems** angry. |

A sentence must contain a subject and a verb to be complete. The **subject** is the topic of the sentence; it names **who**or **what** the sentence is about. The subject is always a noun or pronoun (sometimes with modifiers), and relates directly to the verb.

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| **Examples:** | The math **student studies** diligently. |
|  |  *subject verb* |
|  | **JCCC promotes** a positive learning environment. |

 *subject verb*

Sometimes the subject and verb are reversed.

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| **Examples:** | **Is** the 300-level **course** difficult? |
|  | *verb subject* |
|  | At the front of the classroom **sit** the serious **students**. |

 *verb subject*

# SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Every verb must agree in number with its subject.

A singular subject requires a singular verb.

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| **Examples:** | *Incorrect:* | I runs. | You juggles. | He are angry. |
|  | *Correct:* | I run. | You juggle. | He is angry. |

A plural subject requires a plural verb.

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| **Examples:** | *Incorrect:* | We laughs. | You jumps. | The cats meows. |
|  | *Correct:* | We laugh. | You jump. | The cats meow. |

If there are words (such as a prepositional phrase) between the noun and the verb, the subject-verb agreement may be confusing.

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| **Examples:** | *Incorrect:* Each year, the size of the bears amaze me |
|  | *Correct:* Each year, the size of the bears amazes me. *(The* ***bears*** *do not amaze me; their* ***size*** *amazes me.)* |
|  | *Incorrect:* The services of a doctor was needed. |
|  | *Correct:* The services of a doctor were needed. *(A* ***doctor*** *was not needed; the* ***services*** *of a doctor were needed.)* |

# Types OF VERBS

1. **Intransitive verbs**—These verbs do not have direct objects; the action of the verb is not directed towards an objective.

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| **Examples:** | The baby **cried** loudly. |
|  | Lightning **strikes** quickly. |

1. **Transitive verbs**—These verbs have direct objects; the action of the verb is directed toward some objective.

 **Examples:** She **gave** ten dollars to charity. (*She gave what?* ***Ten dollars****.)*

Last year, they **grew** wheat to sell to China. (T*hey grew what?* ***Wheat.****)*

Transitive verbs can be used in the active or passive voice:

* In the active voice, the subject does something to something else.

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|  **Example:** | Paul **ate** steak for dinner. *(Paul did something to the steak—****ate*** *it.)*  |

* In the passive voice, the subject is acted upon by something.

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|  **Example:** | The steak **was eaten** by Paul. *(The steak was acted upon—****was eaten****—by Paul.)*  |

1. **Linking verbs**—These verbs serve as a connection between a subject and its noun or adjective complement.

Forms of the verb **to be** (**am, is, are**, etc.) are the most common linking verbs, but there are others, such as the sense verbs:

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| appear | feel | prove | smell  |
| become | grow | remain | sound  |
| continue | look | seem  | taste |

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| **Examples:**He **looked** hopeful.The President **is** a citizen like the rest of us.Although the report **appears** factual, it **is** actually inaccurate |

1. **Helping verbs**. These verbs combine with other verbs to show tense, aspect, mood, voice, degree, or manner of action.

There are two important verbs that help form certain verb tenses:

* The verb **to be**(**is, are, were, am***,* etc.). **To be** is a linking verb; however, it can also function as a helping verb.

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|  **Example:** | I **am going** to the concert whether you like it or not. *(****am*** *is a helping verb, part of the verb* ***am going****.)*  |

* The verb **to have** (**has, had, have,** etc.). **To have** can function as a transitive verb (i.e., I **have** the book you ordered), but it can also function as a helping verb.

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|  **Example:** | The office **has called** you time and time again. *(****has*** *is part of the verb* ***has called****, and is being used as a helping verb.)*  |

Certain helping verbs are used to express possibility, such as:

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| be | could | might  |
| can | may | would |

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| **Examples:**I **may take** statistics next semester. It **might be** fun to attend that dance. |

Other helping verbs are used to express emphasis, such as:

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| be | did | need |
| dared | do | will |

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| **Examples:**I **do need** to go. I'm already twenty minutes late!I **will be** there; I promise. |

### Irregular verbs

Verbs that form their past tense in other ways than adding a **–d** or **–ed** at the end are called **irregular** verbs.

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| **Examples:** | I **see** the birds.  |
|  | I **saw** the birds.  |
|  | I have **seen** the birds. |
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|  | I will **begin** tomorrow. |
|  | I **began** yesterday. |
|  | I will have **begun** by next week. |

#

# PRIMARY VERB FORMS

All English verbs, except for **be**, have five primary forms:

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| **Base Form** | **Present Tense**  | **Present Participle** | **Past Tense**  | **Past Participle** |
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| look | looks | looking | looked | looked |
| walk | walks | walking | walked | walked |
| watch | watches | watching | watched | watched |

1. The **base form** is used for the present tense when the subject of the verb is **I, you, we, they,** or aplural noun**.**

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|  **Example:** | I **talk** and you **listen.** |

1. The **present tense** indicates action in the present when the subject is third-person singular (**he, she, it** or a **singular noun).**

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|  **Example:** | He **walks** while she **talks**. |

1. The **present participle** indicates continuing action, created by adding -**ing** to the base form of the verb. In order to function as the main verb in a sentence, a participle must be accompanied by a form of the verb **be.**

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|  **Example:** | Mary **is looking** for a large apartment. |

A **gerund** is a present participle functioning as the subjector object in a sentence.

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| **Examples:** | **Swimming** is good exercise. *(****Swimming*** *is the subject.)* |
|  | Jonathan liked **fishing**. *(****fishing*** *is the direct object of* ***liked.****)* |

A present participle can also be an adjective.

**Example:** He gave **supporting** evidence. *(****supporting*** *modifies* ***evidence.)***

1. The **past tense** indicates action that occurred in the past. A verb's past tense can often be recognized by its **-d** or **-ed** ending. The past tense does notchange form to show person or number.

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| **Examples:** | His parents [or] Richard **agreed** with her. |
|  | His parents [or] Richard **traveled** to Paris and **saw** the Eiffel Tower. |

1. The **past participle** is identical to the past tense form of the verb (other than in some irregular verbs), except that it must be accompanied by a form of the verb **be** to function as the main verb in the sentence.

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| **Examples:** | He **was finished** with the project. |
|  | The cookies **were baked** fresh this morning. |

The past participle can also function as an adjective.

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| **Examples:** | *Passive voice verb*: Nearly everyone **was helped** at the scene.  |
|  | *Adjective*: I never eat an **overcooked** steak.  |

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# Verbals

A **verbal** is a word that looks like a verb and is created from a verb, but does not act as a verb in the sentence. When attempting to identify the verb(s) in a sentence, be careful not to mistake verbals(as gerunds, participles, or infinitives) for verbs.

* Verbals can be used by themselves as either nouns or modifiers, or, like prepositional phrases, they can be part of a phrase.

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| **Examples:** | *Gerund acting as a noun:* **Counting** money daily is a tedious job for bank tellers.  |
|  | *Participle: adjective phrase modifying* ***disappearance****.* **Viewed** in the light of day, the woman's disappearance didn't seem so sinister.  |
|  | *Infinitive: adjective modifying* ***plan*** .They agreed on a plan **to win** the race.  |

* A **gerund** is a verbal (**reading, swimming, playing tennis,** etc.) that is used as a noun. A gerund can be the subject of a sentence.

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|  **Example:** | **Reading** is my favorite pastime. |

* A **present** or **action participle** is a verbal that is used to modify a noun. It can be part of a participle phrase.

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|  **Example:** | Sitting and **reading** in my favorite chair, I enjoy my favorite pastime.  |

* A present or action participle can also be a single-word adjective.

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|  **Example:** | The **reading** habit is a necessity for students. |

**Note**: Both gerunds and present participles are formed from the *-***ing** form of a verb. However, gerunds are always nouns, while participles are always modifiers of nouns.

* An **infinitive** is identified by the word **to,** which precedes it (**to read**). Infinitives and infinitive phrases are verbals that are used not only as nouns and adjectives, but also as adverbs.

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|  **Examples:** | I plan **to read** it this afternoon. |
|  | The book was too boring **to read on**. *(****to read on****, an infinitive phrase, functions here as an adverb that modifies the adjective* ***boring)***  |

* **Past participles** (*-d, -ed, -en*) are also used as adjectives*.*

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|  **Example:** | My teacher wanted the book **read** by Monday. |

The past participle is sometimes called the **passive participle** because it is derived from the past participle form of a verb, which is often used in the passive voice.

***Note:*** *In each of the examples below, the word* ***finished,*** *which is a past, or passive, participle modifies the noun* ***homework.***

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| **Examples:** | I had my homework **finished** by 7 p.m.  |
|  | The **finished** homework lay on my desk.  |
|  | My homework, **finished** by 7 p.m., was in my room. |
|  |  |