

Verb Tables

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Table 11. Types of Verbs: Action vs. Auxiliary

Part of speech	What	Use	Example Uses in Sentences
Verb	Word that expresses either (a) an action or (b) a state of being	(a) expresses the action in the sentence (or clause)	(a) Bo Peep tends sheep, but she sometimes loses them because she would rather attend school. Mary attends school, but she also enjoys tending sheep.
		(b) links the subject of the sentence (or clause) to a later noun, adjective, or phrase related to the subject	(b) Bo Peep was an able student, but now she has become a shepherd. Mary has been attending school and helping Bo Peep afterward, which is why lambs sometimes follow her to school.
Action verb , also termed <i>main verbs</i> (see Table 12)	Word or words that expresses an action and carries the action of the sentence	May be intransitive , standing alone, with no direct object receiving the action	The store closed . The plate broke . The ship sank . The librarian read .
		May be transitive , needing a direct object to receive the action	Melissa closed the store. The children broke the plate. The storm sank the ship. The librarian read three books.
Auxiliary verbs (aka <i>helping verbs</i>) (See also Tables 13–18.)			
Linking verbs (See also Table 13.)	Verbs that link the subject with a subject complement (adjective or nominative), rather than an object:	(a) the <i>to be</i> verbs (<i>am, are, is, was, were</i> , also known as the <i>copula</i>)	I am she; she is I. We are they; they are we. You are he; he is you. I was she; she was I. We were they; they were we. You were he; he was you.
		(b) other linking verbs (e.g., <i>appear, seem, become, grow, remain, stay, turn, feel, look, smell, sound, taste</i>)	Bo Peep seems tired. The sheep remain the same day after day, so she grows weary of them.
Other auxiliary verbs	Verbs that work with action verbs and verb participles to create verb phrases (See also Tables 14–17.)	<i>have</i> verbs: <i>has, have, had</i>	Bo Peep had attended school for several years before she had to drop out to support her family. She has tended sheep for a long time now.
		<i>do</i> verbs: <i>does, do, did</i>	Bo Peep does not attend school now, but she did attend school when she was younger.
		modals: <i>can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would</i> (See also Tables 16, 17.)	Bo Peep can succeed in school if she has time to do so, but she may do so only if she tends her sheep first. She should try to go to night school. In that way, she will complete her education.

Table 12. Action Verbs

<p>Action verbs, also termed <i>main verbs</i>, are words that expresses an action. Action verbs act as the word or words carrying the action of the sentence.</p>				
Types of action verbs	What it is and what it does	Examples of uses in a sentence		
Transitive	Verb that acts on an object and that therefore must always have an object on which to act.	The teammates [<i>laud, praise, torment</i>] the team’s new mascot. The teammates [<i>blitz, tackle, trample</i>] the opposing team’s mascot.		
Intransitive	Verb that needs no object and has no object on which to act (e.g., many movement words and sound-making words)	The trained seals [<i>run, walk, skate, surf, leave, come</i>]. The parrots [<i>sputter, toot, whistle, squawk</i>]. The nuns [<i>pray, sleep, live, die, resign, speak, talk</i>].		
Transitive or intransitive	Verb that can either take an object or stand alone, depending on context (e.g., many art- and craft-related words, such as <i>paint, sculpt, create, weave, knit</i>). Even many intransitive verbs can, on occasion be used transitively (e.g., she <i>prayed</i> him to sleep), and vice versa (e.g., “How did she practice? She <i>blitzed</i> and <i>tackled</i> all afternoon.”).	Otis <i>sang</i> soulfully. James Weldon Johnson <i>sang</i> his own songs. Thurber both <i>wrote</i> and <i>drew</i> . He <i>wrote</i> reviews and <i>drew</i> cartoons. The store <i>closed</i> . Melissa <i>closed</i> the store. The plate <i>broke</i> . The children <i>broke</i> the plate. The ship <i>sank</i> . The storm <i>sank</i> the ship. The librarian <i>read</i> . The librarian <i>read</i> three books. (Think of your own examples for these transitive/intransitive verbs: <i>cheer, cuddle, hug, kiss, shout, open, take, pull, lift, play, see</i> .)		
Troublesome action verbs	Three pairs of action verbs often pose particular problems:	<i>lie</i> (intransitive) vs. <i>lay</i> (transitive)	The textbook <i>lies</i> on the table. It <i>is lying</i> on the table. Yesterday, the book <i>lay</i> on the table, where several other books <i>have lain</i> .	Tamilla <i>lays</i> the comic book on the table. She <i>is laying</i> it on the table. Yesterday, she <i>laid</i> it on the table, where she <i>has laid</i> several other books before.
		<i>rise</i> (intransitive) vs. <i>raise</i> (transitive)	The singers <i>rise</i> . They <i>are rising</i> . Yesterday, they <i>rose</i> , just as they <i>have risen</i> other days.	Tamilla <i>raises</i> the book. She <i>is raising</i> it. Yesterday, she <i>raised</i> it, just as she <i>has raised</i> it many times before.
		<i>sit</i> (intransitive) vs. <i>set</i> (transitive)	The singers <i>sit</i> . They <i>are sitting</i> . Yesterday, they <i>sat</i> , just as they <i>have sat</i> other days.	Tamilla <i>sets</i> the comic book on the table. She <i>is setting</i> it on the table. Yesterday, she <i>set</i> it on the table, where she <i>has set</i> several other books before.

Table 13. Auxiliary (Helping) Verbs: Linking Verbs

Types of Linking Verbs	Instances	Uses in Sentences	Example Uses in Sentences
<i>to be verbs</i> (aka the <i>copula</i>)	<i>am, are, is, was, were</i>	Verbs that link the subject with a subject complement (adjective or nominative), rather than an object. Therefore, linking verbs are <u>always</u> intransitive.	I <u>am</u> she; she <u>is</u> I. We <u>are</u> they; they <u>are</u> we. You <u>are</u> he; he <u>is</u> you. I <u>am</u> smart, but you <u>are</u> smarter, and your dolphin Nemo <u>is</u> smartest. I <u>was</u> she; she <u>was</u> I. We <u>were</u> they; they <u>were</u> we. You <u>were</u> he; he <u>was</u> you. Before undergoing the brain-enhancement program, Nemo <u>was</u> already smart, but I <u>was</u> smarter, and you <u>were</u> smartest.
present (singular)	<i>am</i> (1 st person) <i>are</i> (2 nd person) <i>is</i> (3 rd person)		
present (plural)	<i>are</i> (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd person)		
past (singular)	<i>was</i> (1 st , 3 rd person) <i>were</i> (2 nd person)		
past (plural)	<i>were</i> (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd person)		
<u>other linking verbs</u>	Note. When in doubt as to whether one of the following verbs is being used as an action verb or a linking verb, ask yourself whether you could substitute <i>am, are, is, was, or were</i> in its stead. If you can, it's a linking verb. If you can't, it's being used as an action verb.		
	e.g., <i>appear, seem</i>	Links the subject to its apparent emotional or physical state	You <u>seem</u> tired. He <u>appears</u> exhausted.
	e.g., <i>become, grow, remain, stay, turn</i>	Links the subject to a description of how it did or did not change	Imelda <u>grows</u> weary of studying grammar, as it <u>remains</u> the same year after year. She <u>becomes</u> tired just thinking about it.
	e.g., <i>feel, look, smell, sound, taste</i>	Links the subject to its description	This sushi <u>smells</u> fishy, but it <u>tastes</u> delicious. Uh-oh. I <u>feel</u> nauseated.

Table 14. Verbals: Gerunds, Infinitives, and Participles

Verbals	Verbals are formed from verbs but do not act alone as verbs in sentences. They may be used alone as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. They may also be used with auxiliary verbs to form verb phrases (<i>see</i> Table 15).			
Type	How it is formed	What it does	Examples	Uses in sentences
Gerund, used as a noun	Gerund: [verb] + <i>-ing</i>	acts as a noun	<i>e.g., sleeping, eating, prancing, wrapping, gliding, flying</i>	After <i>eating</i> several thousand cookies and <i>drinking</i> countless glasses of milk, the jolly old man dreamed of <i>slouching</i> in his easy chair, with his belt unbuckled. <i>Sleeping</i> is an elf’s favorite winter activity.
Infinitive, used as a noun, adjective, or adverb	Infinitive: <i>to</i> + [verb]	acts as a noun	<i>e.g., to sleep, to eat, to prance, to wrap, to glide, to fly, to bound, to slide</i>	All the elves wanted was <i>to sleep</i> . The jolly old man promised <i>to let</i> them sleep starting at noon December 25. <i>To stay awake</i> until then was going to be difficult. (Noun “to sleep” is a nominative subject complement; “to let” is a direct object; “To stay awake” is a subject.)
		acts as an adjective		He reminded them, however, that they did not have time <i>to sleep</i> before then. (Adjective “to sleep” modifies noun “time.”)
		acts as an adverb		The elves were eager <i>to sleep</i> . (Adverb “to sleep” modifies the adjective “eager.”)
Participle, used as an adjective	Present participle: [verb] + <i>-ing</i>	acts as an adjective	<i>e.g., bounding</i> reindeer, <i>sliding</i> sleigh	The <i>parking</i> lot was full of <i>prancing</i> reindeer.
	Past participle: [verb] + <i>-ed</i> (or <i>-d</i>) (for regular verbs)		<i>e.g., unwrapped</i> toys, <i>thrown</i> ball, <i>eaten</i> cookies	Several <i>parked</i> sleighs still await the arrival of the remaining reindeer teams.

Note. To form gerunds and present participles, some verbs drop a final “e,” e.g., *prancing*; others double the final consonant, e.g., *wrapping*. To form past participles, some verbs add only a final *-d*, e.g., *pranced*; others double the final consonant, e.g., *unwrapped*; and still others have irregular past participles, e.g., *thrown*, *eaten*.

Table 15. Participles, Used with Auxiliary Verbs, to Form Verb Phrases

Type	What it is and does	Examples	Uses in sentences
Present participle: [verb] + <i>-ing</i>	used with a <i>to be</i> verb, to create a progressive verb phrase	<u>present progressive</u> : <i>is prancing, are bounding, am sliding,</i>	The reindeer <i>are prancing</i> around the lot.
		<u>past progressive</u> : <i>were gliding, was flying</i>	The sleighs <i>were sliding</i> into the lot.
	used with a <i>to have</i> verb and a <i>to be</i> verb, to create a perfect progressive verb phrase	<u>present perfect progressive</u> : <i>has been prancing, have been gliding</i>	Rudolph <i>has been prancing</i> even more than the other reindeer.
		<u>past perfect progressive</u> : <i>had been bounding</i>	Rudolph <i>had been prancing</i> excitedly when he saw the jolly old man arrive.
Past participle: [verb] + <i>-ed</i> (or <i>-d</i>) (for a regular verb)	used with a <i>to be</i> verb, to create a verb phrase	<i>is assembled, am tired, are unwrapped, was thrown, were eaten</i>	With the help of the reindeer, all the toys <i>are delivered</i> each year.
	Note. The use of the past participle with <i>to be</i> verbs creates the <u>passive voice</u> . Many writers suggest rewording <u>passive-voice</u> sentences to create <u>active-voice</u> sentences. E.g., “The reindeer help to deliver all the toys each year.”		
	used with a <i>to have</i> verb, to create a present perfect or past perfect verb phrase	<u>present perfect</u> : <i>has assembled, have unwrapped</i>	By the time the sleighs take off, the elves <i>have assembled</i> thousands of bicycles and <i>have wrapped</i> countless other toys.
		<u>past perfect</u> : <i>had thrown, had eaten</i>	By the time the sleighs took off, the elves <i>had assembled</i> thousands of bicycles and <i>had wrapped</i> countless other toys.
Note. To form <u>present participles</u> , some verbs drop a final “e,” e.g., <i>prancing</i> ; others double the final consonant, e.g., <i>wrapping</i> . To form <u>past participles</u> , some verbs add only a final <i>-d</i> , e.g., <i>pranced</i> ; others double the final consonant, e.g., <i>unwrapped</i> ; and still others have irregular past participles, e.g., <i>thrown, eaten</i> .			

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Table 16. Other Auxiliary Verbs: Verb Phrases with *Have, Be, Do,* and Modal Verbs

What	Uses in sentences		
<u>Other auxiliary verbs</u>	Verbs that work with action verbs and verb participles to create verb phrases		
<i>have</i> verbs	<i>have, has, had</i> (to form perfect tenses; see Table 18)	+ past participle: regular verb, ending in <i>-d</i> or <i>-ed</i> , e.g., <i>live/lived, talk/talked, walk/walked</i>	Auntie Mame <i>had lived</i> in Paris long ago, but she <i>has lived</i> in New York a long time now.
		+ past participle: irregular verb with the same form for past tense and past participle, e.g., <i>buy/bought, keep/kept, spend/spent, teach/taught</i>	Auntie Mame <i>had kept</i> a winter home in Paris long ago, but she <i>has spent</i> winters in New York for a long time now.
		+ past participle: irregular verb with a different form for past tense and for past participle, e.g., <i>begin/began/begun, give/gave/given, sing/sang/sung</i>	Auntie Mame <i>had sung</i> in Paris long ago, but she <i>has sung</i> on the New York stage since 1992.
<i>be</i> verbs	<i>am, are, is, was, were</i> (to form progressive forms of verbs; see Table 18)	+ present participle: [<i>verb</i>] + <i>-ing</i> , e.g., <i>talking, walking, speaking, running, buying, singing</i>	She <i>was singing</i> in Paris long before her nephew <i>was walking</i> .
<i>do</i> verbs	<i>do, does, did</i>	+ present-tense verb, e.g., <i>walk, talk, speak, run</i>	She <i>does</i> not <i>sing</i> in Paris now, but she <i>did sing</i> there a long time ago.
modal verbs	<i>can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would</i>	+ present tense verb	Patrick <i>should</i> not <i>live</i> in Paris, because he <i>cannot attend</i> school there. He <i>should start</i> school soon, or he <i>will miss</i> the chance to use his scholarship.
		+ <i>be</i> + present participle ([<i>verb</i>] + <i>-ing</i>), e.g., <i>be singing, be walking</i>	Patrick <i>cannot be living</i> in Paris while attending school in New York.
		+ <i>have been</i> + present participle ([<i>verb</i>] + <i>-ing</i>), e.g., <i>have been singing, have been walking</i>	Patrick <i>could have been living</i> in New York while attending school.

Table 17. Modal Verbs

Modal	What it is and does	Use in a sentence
<i>can</i>	expresses a present ability	The old lady <i>can</i> swallow flies and spiders.
<i>could</i>	expresses a past ability	The old lady <i>could</i> swallow flies and spiders before she tried to swallow the horse.
<i>may</i>	expresses permission, or expresses a possibility	The old lady is asking the insect keeper whether she <i>may</i> swallow the spiders that eat the flies. At the picnic, the old lady <i>may</i> swallow flies and spiders if she doesn't fill up on shoofly pie.
<i>might</i>	expresses a possibility that is somewhat less likely than that expressed by <i>may</i> ; also more likely to be used to express a past possibility	At the picnic, the old lady <i>might</i> swallow flies and spiders if she doesn't fill up on shoofly pie. The old lady <i>might</i> have swallowed flies at last year's picnic.
<i>must</i>	expresses a requirement; sometimes used to express a conclusion or an explanation	The old lady <i>must</i> not swallow flies if she wants to keep her job at the insect museum. The old lady still has her job at the insect museum, so she <i>must</i> have stopped swallowing flies.
<i>ought</i>	expresses an obligation; sometimes used to express a probability	The old lady <i>ought</i> to stop swallowing flies. The flies <i>ought</i> to be safe around the old lady now, because she now enjoys swallowing spiders.
<i>shall, will</i>	expresses a future event, occurrence, or existence	The old lady <i>will</i> stop swallowing flies and spiders. The old lady <i>shall</i> stop swallowing flies and spiders.
<i>should</i>	expresses a suggestion, recommendation, or obligation; sometimes used to express a possibility	The old lady <i>should</i> stop swallowing flies and spiders. The flies <i>should</i> be safe around the old lady now, because she now enjoys swallowing spiders.
<i>would</i>	expresses a conditional probability; sometimes used to express a future event, a request or invitation, or a repeated past event, occurrence, or existence	The old lady <i>would</i> stop swallowing flies <i>if</i> she could find enough spiders to swallow. The old lady told me she <i>would</i> stop swallowing flies pretty soon. Granny, <i>would</i> you please stop swallowing flies? Before she got her job at the insect museum, the old lady <i>would</i> eat flies day after day.

Table 18. Verb Tenses and Their Progressive Forms

The past	The present	The future
<p>Past tense (simple): existed or happened in the past</p> <p>[past tense of verb] e.g., <u>regular verbs:</u> <i>lived, walked</i> <u>irregular verbs:</u> <i>gave, sang</i> I <i>knew</i> an old lady who <i>swallowed</i> flies. <u>When?</u> At some specific moment or time period in the past (and not continuing into the present).</p>	<p>Present tense (simple): exists or happens in the present</p> <p>[present tense of verb] e.g., <u>regular and irregular verbs:</u> <i>live/lives, walk/walks, give/gives, sing/sings</i> I <i>know</i> an old lady who <i>swallows</i> flies. <u>When?</u> At a definite moment or time period during the present.</p>	<p>Future tense (simple): will exist or happen in the future</p> <p><i>will</i> [or <i>shall</i>] [present tense of verb] e.g., <u>regular and irregular verbs:</u> <i>will live, will walk, will give, will sing</i> I <i>will know</i> an old lady who <i>will swallow</i> flies. <u>When?</u> At some definite time in the future.</p>
<p>Past progressive: was continuing to exist or to occur for a period of time in the past</p> <p><i>was/were</i> + [present participle, ending in <i>-ing</i>] e.g., <u>regular and irregular verbs:</u> <i>was living, was walking, was giving, was singing</i> An old lady <i>was swallowing</i> flies. <u>When?</u> Over a continuing time period in the past.</p>	<p>Present progressive: is continuing to exist or to occur for a period of time in the present</p> <p><i>is/are/am</i> + [present participle, ending in <i>-ing</i>] e.g., <u>regular and irregular verbs:</u> <i>is living, is walking, is giving, is singing</i> An old lady <i>is swallowing</i> flies. <u>When?</u> Over a continuing time period in the present.</p>	<p>Future progressive: will be continuing to exist or to occur for a period of time in the future</p> <p><i>will be</i> + [present participle, ending in <i>-ing</i>] e.g., <u>regular and irregular verbs:</u> <i>will be living, will be walking, will be giving, will be singing</i> An old lady <i>will be swallowing</i> flies. <u>When?</u> Over a continuing time period in the future.</p>
<p>Past perfect tense: existed or happened before a particular time in the past</p> <p><i>had</i> + [past participle, ending in <i>-ed</i>] e.g., <u>regular verbs:</u> <i>had lived, had walked</i> <u>irregular verbs:</u> <i>had given, had sung</i> The old lady <i>had swallowed</i> numerous flies before she started swallowing spiders. <u>When?</u> At some unspecified time before a specific time in the past.</p>	<p>Present perfect tense: exists or happens before a particular time in the present</p> <p><i>has/have</i> + [past participle, ending in <i>-ed</i>] e.g., <u>regular verbs:</u> <i>has lived, has walked</i> <u>irregular verbs:</u> <i>has given, has sung</i> The old lady <i>has swallowed</i> several flies, and now she may start swallowing spiders. <u>When?</u> Starting at some unspecified time before now, and possibly still occurring in the present.</p>	<p>Future perfect tense: will exist or happen before a particular time in the future</p> <p><i>will have</i> + [past participle, ending in <i>-ed</i>] e.g., <u>regular verbs:</u> <i>will have lived, will have walked</i> <u>irregular verbs:</u> <i>will have given, will have sung</i> The old lady <i>will have swallowed</i> several flies before she starts to swallow spiders. <u>When?</u> Starting at some unspecified time before a specific future event.</p>
<p>Past perfect progressive: was continuing to exist or to occur before a particular time in the past</p> <p><i>had been</i> + [present participle, ending in <i>-ing</i>] e.g., <u>regular and irregular verbs:</u> <i>had been living, had been walking, had been giving, had been singing</i> The old lady <i>had been swallowing</i> flies before she started swallowing spiders. <u>When?</u> Over a continuing time period before a specific time in the past.</p>	<p>Present perfect progressive: is continuing to exist or to occur before a particular time in the present</p> <p><i>has/have been</i> + [present participle, ending in <i>-ing</i>] e.g., <u>regular and irregular verbs:</u> <i>has been living, has been walking, has been giving, has been singing</i> The old lady <i>has been swallowing</i> flies, but she may start swallowing spiders soon. <u>When?</u> Starting at some time before now and still continuing into the present.</p>	<p>Future perfect progressive: will be continuing to exist or to occur before a particular time in the future</p> <p><i>will have been</i> + [present participle, ending in <i>-ing</i>] e.g., <u>regular and irregular verbs:</u> <i>will have been living, will have been walking, will have been giving, will have been singing</i> The old lady <i>will have been swallowing</i> flies for years before she starts to swallow spiders. <u>When?</u> Over some continuing time period before a specific future event.</p>

Table 19. Verb Moods

Moods	The present	The past
<p><u>Indicative mood</u> indicates facts, opinions, or questions about facts or opinions</p>	<p><u>Present Indicative:</u> fact, opinion, or question about what exists or happens in the present [present tense of verb] I <i>know</i> an old lady who <i>swallows</i> flies.</p>	<p><u>Past Indicative:</u> fact, opinion, or question about what existed or happened in the past [past tense of verb] I <i>knew</i> an old lady who <i>swallowed</i> flies.</p>
<p><u>Subjunctive mood</u> indicates either (a) suggestions or necessities, or (b) wishes or other conditions that are contrary to fact</p>	<p><u>Present Subjunctive:</u> expresses a suggestion (e.g., <i>ask, request, recommend, suggest</i>) or a necessity (e.g., <i>essential, necessary, crucial</i>); it may be used with present or past tense verbs; it always appears in subordinate clauses beginning with the pronoun <i>that</i>. The present subjunctive may take either of two forms: (1) present tense verb, used in its plural form, regardless of its subject [<i>that</i>] <i>I/we/you/he/she/it/they</i> [present tense verb, plural form] I recommend <i>that</i> she <i>invite</i> the fly-swallowing old lady to all our picnics. It's crucial <i>that</i> he <i>ask</i> the old lady to stay away from our Venus Flytrap plant. (2) [unconjugated] <i>be</i>, used with the past tense of the verb: [<i>that</i>] <i>I/we/you/he/she/it/they</i> <i>be</i> [past-tense verb] I recommend <i>that</i> the fly-swallowing old lady <i>be invited</i> to all our picnics. I urge <i>that</i> the laboratory's hybrid flies <i>be kept</i> away from the old lady.</p>	<p><u>Past Subjunctive:</u> a clause expressing a condition or a wish that is contrary to fact, introduced by <i>if, as if, or as though</i> [<i>if or as if or as though</i>] <i>I/we/you/he/she/it/they</i> <i>were</i> <i>If</i> the old lady <i>were</i> my mother, I would discourage her from eating flies. <i>If</i> that fly <i>were</i> smart, it would stay away from the old lady. The old lady seems to enjoy eating flies, <i>as if</i> she <i>were</i> a hungry spider. <i>If I were</i> to know an old lady who swallowed flies, I would invite her to our picnics all summer long.</p> <p><u>Note.</u> Use the past subjunctive <i>only</i> if you <i>know</i> that a particular event is contrary to fact. If unsure, use the indicative mood. For instance, "If the old lady <i>was</i> at the picnic, she <i>was</i> probably eating flies." Because the speaker is unsure whether she was or was not at the picnic, the indicative mood is correct.</p>
<p><u>Imperative mood</u></p>	<p><u>Imperative mood:</u> [same as present tense of verb] Please <i>stop</i> eating flies, Grandma. Please <i>keep</i> the hybrid flies away from Grandma when she visits our lab.</p>	