

Verbs

You will commonly find three types of verbs in the sentences you read and write. Each type of verb fulfills a particular role in the sentence.

1. Action Verbs

An action verb is exactly that. It shows the subject noun performing some kind of action. Note that an action is not necessarily a physically obvious activity.

Thinking and *dreaming* are also actions.

Examples of action verbs:

run, act, think, walk, dream, speak, like, want, chat, skate, surf, fluctuate, surrender, fight, cry, laugh, love, cook, smell, stare, tell, turn, risk, die

Can you come up with some more?

2. Linking Verbs

A linking verb connects the subject noun to an idea about the noun. For example, in the sentence, *Laura is sweet*, the verb “is” links the subject Laura to the idea that she is sweet.

Linking verbs are most commonly different forms of the verb “to be.”

am, are, is (present tense) **was, were** (past tense)

The most basic form of a verb is called the **infinitive**. Infinitive verbs always have the word “to” before them. Thus the verbs *am, are, is, was or were* are all forms of the infinitive *to be*.

3. Helping Verbs (Auxiliary Verbs)

A helping verb always accompanies an action or linking verb in a sentence.

A helping verb is never used by itself; it is always followed by an action or linking verb. Some of the most common helping verbs are *can, could, do, did, has, had, have, may, might, must, shall, should, will* and *would*.

The helping verb’s role is to give the main verb a special meaning or time frame (tense).

For example: **Ron *should* do his homework.**

In this sentence, the main verb is “do” and the helping verb is “should.”

Note that without the helping verb, the sentence in present tense would be:

Ron *does* his homework.

As you can see, adding the helping verb *should* changes the meaning of the sentence. Note also that with the addition of the helping verb, the main verb changes from *does* to *do*. When paired with a helping verb, the main verb takes its infinitive form but without the “to” in front of it.

As mentioned above, helping verbs are often used to give the main verb a particular time frame. These different time frames are indicated through various **verb tenses**. You will learn more about verb tenses in the next section.

To review, there are three types of verbs:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

For practice, circle each verb or group of verbs in the sentences below:

1. Monica is my student.
2. She wants to become a teacher.
3. She will be successful.
4. Sergio tries a new sport.
5. He decides to stick to soccer.
6. The president delivers his State of the Union Address.
7. The public listens with great interest.
8. California has a new governor.
9. Governor Schwarzenegger must balance California’s budget.
10. Sara could take more units, or she could get a part-time job to help pay for educational expenses.
11. Sara visited the Financial Aid Office where they told her about the BOG waiver that could cover her enrollment fees.
12. The Financial Aid advisor suggested that she complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).