

Chapter 17 Key Concepts

Chapter 17 Verbs

The verb is perhaps the most important part of speech in English. Without it, there would be no sentences. A **verb** is a word that expresses time while showing an action, a condition, or the fact that something exists.

If you say, "Artists *paint* portraits," the verb *paint* shows an action. If you say, "Treasures *are* on display," the verb *are* shows a condition. If you say, "The king *was* there," the verb *was* expresses existence.

In this chapter, you will learn about *action verbs*, *linking verbs*, and *helping verbs*.

KEY CONCEPT

An **action verb** is a verb that tells what action someone or something is performing.

EXAMPLES: The king rules.
 Famine struck the people.

The person or thing that performs the action is called the *subject* of the verb. The verb *rules* tells what the subject *king* does. The verb *struck* tells what the subject *Famine* did.

KEY CONCEPT

Action verbs show *mental* action as well as *visible* action.

VISIBLE ACTION: We *chose* two books about China.

MENTAL ACTION: They *remember* the film about China.

KEY CONCEPT

An action verb is **transitive** if it directs action toward someone or something named in the same sentence. An action verb is **intransitive** if it does not direct action toward someone or something named in the sentence.

The receiver of the action of a transitive verb is called the *object* of the verb. Intransitive verbs, however, have no objects.

TRANSITIVE: Pat *carried* her books to the lecture on Asia.

INTRANSITIVE: The temperature *fell* quickly.

Transitive or Intransitive? Most action verbs can be transitive in one sentence and intransitive in another. To determine whether a verb is transitive or intransitive, ask *Whom?* or *What?* after the verb. If you can find the answer in the sentence, the verb is transitive. If not, the verb is intransitive.

TRANSITIVE: Bill *reads* books about Asia.

INTRANSITIVE: Bill *reads* every night before going to bed.

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KEY CONCEPT

A **linking verb** is a verb that connects a word at or near the beginning of a sentence with a word at or near the end.

Forms of *Be*

KEY CONCEPT

In English, the most common linking verb is some form of the verb *be*.

Notice how the forms of *be*—*is*, *are*, and *was*—connect words at the beginning of the following sentences with words at the end.

EXAMPLES: Sara *is* an astronaut.
He *was* glad.

The following chart lists the forms of the verb *be*.

THE FORMS OF <i>BE</i>			
am	am being	can be	have been
are	are being	could be	has been
is	is being	may be	had been
was	was being	might be	could have been
were	were being	must be	may have been
		shall be	might have been
		should be	must have been
		will be	shall have been
		would be	should have been
			will have been
			would have been

Note About Verbs Expressing Existence: The verb *be* is not always used as a linking verb. Sometimes, it simply expresses existence, generally by showing where something is located.

EXAMPLES: The missile *should be* on the launch pad.
Here *is* your ticket.

KEY CONCEPT

Other verbs may be used in the same way as *be* to link two parts of a sentence.

OTHER LINKING VERBS					
appear	feel	look	seem	sound	taste
become	grow	remain	smell	stay	turn

In the examples below, you can see how these verbs act as linking verbs by helping words at the end of the sentences name or describe the place or thing at the beginning.

EXAMPLES: The situation on board *remained* serious.
The astronauts *grew* anxious.

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KEY CONCEPT

Helping verbs are verbs that can be added to another verb to make a single verb phrase.

Recognizing Helping Verbs

Learning the forms of *be* in the chart in section 17.2 and the other verbs that can be used as helping verbs will help you recognize helping verbs in sentences.

KEY CONCEPT

Any of the many forms of *be* as well as some other verbs can be used as helping verbs.

HELPING VERBS OTHER THAN THE FORMS OF <i>BE</i>			
do	have	shall	can
does	has	should	could
did	had	will	may
	would	might	
		must	

Verb phrases are created by the addition of helping verbs to other verbs. The following chart lists six examples, but the possibilities are almost endless.

VERB PHRASES	
Helping Verbs	Verbs
am	talking
did	play
can	write
will be	studying
should have	seen
might have been	considered

Helping verbs are sometimes called *auxiliary verbs* or *auxiliaries* because they add meaning to other verbs. Notice how using helping verbs can change the meaning of a sentence.

WITHOUT HELPING VERBS: They *sing* in the morning.

WITH HELPING VERBS: They *will sing* in the morning.
They *might sing* in the morning.

KEY CONCEPT

Other words may sometimes separate helping verbs from main verbs in sentences.

The following examples show the words of a verb phrase together as well as verb phrases interrupted by other words.

WORDS TOGETHER: They *will be flying* in the morning.

WORDS SEPARATED: They *will* definitely not *be going* with us.
Have you and the others *met* our friends?