

VERBS

A verb is defined as a part of speech that describes an action or occurrence or indicates a state of being. It could be a word (come) or a phrase (put up with).

Verbs can be used to express distinction in time through tense.

Verbs as a class of words can be divided into three (3) categories, according to their function within the verbs phrase.

1. Full verbs: (lexical verbs) {open class}

Eg: leave, steal, burst

2. Auxiliary: (helping verbs). They are used together with full verbs to indicate tense or form negative a interrogative form (operator) {closed class} {Be / have / do }
3. Modals: considered by many as auxiliaries in the sense that they are used with full verbs (assist) to express meanings of possibility, permission and necessity

Of these three classes, the full verb can act only as main verb, the modal can act only as an auxiliary but the auxiliary can act either as a full verb or as an auxiliary.

I- Types of verbs

There are many types of verbs:

1. Auxiliary and Lexical Verbs

An **auxiliary** (also known as a helping verb) determines the mood or tense of another verb in a phrase. In the sentence, "It will rain tonight," for example, the word "will" helps the verb "rain" by explaining that the action will take place in the future. The primary auxiliaries are the various forms of be, have, and do. The modal auxiliaries include can, could, may, must, should, will, and would.

A **lexical verb** (also known as a full or main verb) is any verb in English that isn't an auxiliary: It conveys a real meaning and doesn't depend on another verb, such as, "It rained all night."

2. Dynamic and Stative Verbs

A **dynamic verb** indicates an action, process, or sensation: "I bought a new guitar."

A **stative verb** (such as be, have, know, like, own, and seem) describes a state, situation, or condition: "Now I own a Gibson Explorer."

3. Finite and Nonfinite Verbs

A **finite verb** expresses tense and can occur on its own in a main clause: "She walked to school."

A **nonfinite verb** (an infinitive or participle) doesn't show a distinction in tense and can occur on its own only in a dependent phrase: "While walking to school, she spotted a blue jay."

4. Regular and Irregular Verbs

A **regular verb** forms its past tense and past participle by adding -d or -ed (or in some cases -t) to the base form: "We finished the project."

An **irregular verb** doesn't form the past tense by adding -d or -ed: "Gus ate the wrapper on his candy bar."

5. Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Study the sentences:

- Did you see my sister?
- He described the new building.
- They arrived three hours late.
- He coughed.

Some verbs (e.g. see, describe) are followed by an object. These are called **transitive verbs**. Other verbs that are transitive in their most common meanings include arrest, avoid, do, enjoy, find, force, get, give, grab, hit, like, pull, report, shock, take, tell, touch, want, warn.

Some verbs (e.g. arrive, cough) are not followed by an object. These are called **intransitive verbs**. Other verbs that are intransitive in their most common meanings include appear, come, fall, go, happen, matter, sleep, swim, wait.

Note:

- *A good dictionary will list the meanings of verbs and tell you whether each meaning is transitive or intransitive or both.*
- **If a verb cannot be followed by an object, it cannot be made passive.**

Some verbs can be both transitive and intransitive. Verbs like this are often used to talk about some kind of change. Other examples are break, burn, empty, increase, open, shut, and spoil. E.g: I closed the door. The door closed.

Some transitive verbs can have their objects left out when the meaning is clear from the context. Verbs like this include answer, ask, cook, dance, drink, eat, fail, phone, read, sing, wash, win, write.

- He has smoked (cigarettes) since he was 10.
- She plays (the saxophone) beautifully.

6. Ditransitive verbs (Verbs + two objects)

Some verbs are followed by two objects. Usually the first object is a person (or group of people) and the second object is a thing:

- Can you bring me (= object 1) some milk (= object 2) from the shops?
- I made him (= object 1) a cup of coffee. (= object 2)

*With many verbs that can have two objects, we can reverse the order of the objects if we put **for** or **to** before object 1 (this is then called a prepositional object). Compare:*

- They built us a new house. and • They built a new house for us.
- Can you give me that bandage? and • Can you give that bandage to me?

We often use this pattern if we want to focus particular attention on the object after for/to. We also use it if object 1 is a lot longer than object 2:

- Jasmin taught music to a large number of children at the school, {not Jasmin taught a large number of children at the school music.)
- Judith booked theatre tickets for all the students who were doing her Shakespeare course. (not Judith booked all the students who were doing her Shakespeare course theatre tickets.)

We use for + object with verbs such as *book, build, buy, catch, choose, cook, fetch, find, make, order, pour, save.*

We use to + object with verbs such as *award, give, hand, lend, offer, owe, pass, show, teach, tell, throw. play, post,*

A few other verbs that are followed by two objects cannot have their objects reversed with for/to. Verbs like this include allow, ask, cost, deny, forgive, guarantee, permit, refuse.

- We all envied him his lifestyle, (but not We all envied his lifestyle for/to him.)

Some verbs can only have a second object if this is a prepositional object with to. Verbs like this include admit, announce, demonstrate, describe, introduce, mention, point out, prove, report, say, suggest.

- They explained the procedure. /
- *They explained me the procedure.
- They explained the procedure to me. /
- The suspect confessed his crime. /
- *The suspect confessed the police his crime.
- The suspect confessed his crime to the police. /

The verbs collect, mend and raise can only have a second object if this is a prepositional object with for: He raised a lot of money for charity, (not He raised charity a lot of money.)

II- Verbs followed by other verbs

1. Verb + to - infinitive or bare infinitive

1.1 Verb + (object) + to-infinitive

After some verbs, we need to include an object before a to-infinitive. There are many verbs like this including allow, believe, cause, command, enable, encourage, entitle, force, invite, order, persuade, show, teach, tell.

- I considered her to be the best person for the job.
- The police warned everyone to stay inside with their windows closed.

After some verbs, we cannot include an object before a to-infinitive. Verbs like this include agree, consent, decide, fail, hope, pretend, start, volunteer.

- The shop refused to accept a cheque.
- He threatened to report their behaviour to the principal, (not He threatened them to report their behaviour...)

After some verbs, an object might or might not be included before a to-infinitive. Verbs like this include can bear (in negative sentences and in questions), hate, help, like, love, want, wish.

- I prefer to drive. (= I do the driving) and
- I prefer you to drive. (= you do the driving)
- We need to complete this report by Friday. (= we complete it) and
- We need them to complete this report by Friday. (= they complete it)

Note that after help we can use either a to-infinitive or bare infinitive:

- I'll help you (to) arrange the party if you like.

1.2 Verb + (object) + bare infinitive

Some verbs are followed by a bare infinitive after an object. Verbs like this include feel, hear, observe, overhear, notice, see, watch; have, let.

- She noticed him run away from the house, (not ...noticed him to run...)
- I made Peter wait outside, (not ...made Peter to wait...)

Note, however, that in passive sentences with these verbs, we use a to-infinitive:

- He was overheard to say that he hoped John would resign.

A few verbs can be followed directly by a bare infinitive in fairly idiomatic phrases, including hear tell, make believe, and let (it) slip. Note also the phrases make do and let go: ('Don't let go!')

- He **made believe** that he had caught the huge fish himself. (= pretended)
- She **let (it) slip** that she's leaving. (= said it unintentionally)
- Jim borrowed my new bike; I had to **make do** with my old one. (= it wasn't the one I wanted)

2. Verb + to - infinitive or -ing form?

Some verbs are followed by a to-infinitive but not -ing: agree, aim, ask, decline, demand, fail, hesitate, hope, hurry, manage, offer, plan, prepare, refuse, want, wish.

Some verbs are followed by -ing form but not a to-infinitive: admit, avoid, consider, delay, deny, detest, dread, envisage, feel like, finish, imagine, miss, recall, resent, risk, suggest.

The verbs begin, cease, start, and continue could be followed by either a to-infinitive or an -ing form with little difference in meaning:

- Even though it was raining, they continued to play / playing.

However, with these verbs we normally avoid using two -ing forms together, as a repeated pattern can sound awkward:

- I'm starting to learn Swahili. (rather than I'm starting learning Swahili.)

Other verbs can be followed by either a to-infinitive or an -ing form, but there can be a difference in meaning. These include come, go on, mean, regret, remember, stop, try.

- After some years, they came to accept her as an equal. (to talk about a gradual change)
- He came hurrying up the path. (to say that someone moves in the way that is described)