



## VERBS

Main verbs express action or a state of being, and auxiliary verbs (*be*, *have*, *do*) help conjugate main verbs for tense (present, past, future), voice (active, passive), and aspect (perfect, progressive). Verbs or verb phrases can sometimes function as other elements in a sentence, such as a subject.

### 6a

### Main verbs

Main verbs can be divided into three different types: linking, transitive, and intransitive.

#### 1. Linking verbs

Linking verbs link subjects to a noun (or noun phrase) or adjective (or adjective phrase) in the verb phrase or predicate. Sense verbs, such as *smell* or *taste*, and stative verbs, such as *seem* or *become*, also function as linking verbs. When a noun or adjective follows a linking verb, it is called a subject complement or predicate noun/predicate adjective.

#### Common linking verbs

**Forms of *to be*** → is, am, are, was, were, be, been, being

**Sense verbs** → smell, sound, appear, taste, feel, look

**Other stative (state of being) verbs** → seem, become, remain, stay, turn, get

- Sally and John **are pilots** who have experience flying Air Force One.  
N
- Air Force One **is the call sign** for the president's plane when the plane is a U.S. Air Force plane.  
NP
- Air Force One **remains ready**.  
Adj

Linking verbs can also connect subjects to prepositional phrases that are functioning as adverbial complements, giving necessary information to complete the sentence.

- Air Force One **is on the ground**.  
PP

## EXERCISE 1

*Directions: Underline the linking verbs in the following sentences.*

*Example: Air Force One is on the ground.*

1. The new pilot seems happy to be flying Air Force One today.
2. He met the President earlier, and the President agrees that the pilot appears ready to be in charge.
3. Pilots of Air Force One must be intelligent, steady, and reliable.
4. Air Force One remains standing by at all times.
5. At the request of the White House, the kitchen of Air Force One is always prepared to serve pizza.

## 2. Intransitive verbs

Intransitive verbs (Vi) do not need a direct object since the action of an intransitive verb is complete in and of itself.

- When she saw the helicopter approaching too close, the pilot **shouted**.  
Vi

→ The plane **swerved**.

Vi

### 3. Transitive verbs

Transitive verbs (Vt) describe an action that is directly received by a direct object, which is needed to complete the action and the meaning of the verb. A direct object answers one of these questions: Whom? What?

→ When a president **uses** a **Coast Guard plane**, the call sign for

Vt DO

the plane is Coast Guard One.

Note in the above sentence that the direct object receives the action of the transitive verb directly. **What** does a president use? A Coast Guard plane.

Transitive verbs can also trigger the use of an indirect object, which receives the action of the verb in an indirect manner. An indirect object answers one of these questions: To whom? To what? For whom? For what?

→ Because of her quick thinking during a disaster, the President

**gave** the pilot a medal.

Vt IO DO

**To whom** did the President give the medal? The pilot. (the indirect object)

**What** did the President give? A medal. (the direct object)

### EXERCISE 2

*Directions: Underline the transitive verbs, and circle the direct objects in the following sentences.*

*Example: The pilot canceled the flight.*

1. With the new pilot at the controls, Air Force One left the runway.

2. After landing, the Secret Service agents guided the President off the plane and into the hangar.
3. The committee had requested a secret meeting before the convention.
4. Although the President's advisors opposed the idea, the President agreed.
5. While the meeting occurred, the new pilot told himself that he had a great job.

## 6b

## Auxiliary verbs and modals

Helping verbs and modals are types of auxiliary verbs and can be used to mark main verbs for tense (present, past, future), voice (active, passive), and aspect (perfect, progressive). A helping verb or a modal, if used, always occurs before the main verb.

Helping verb → The pilot **is celebrating** tonight.

Aux. MainV

Modal → Tomorrow, we **may encounter** another problem.

Aux. MainV

## Auxiliary verbs and modals

Forms of *to be* → is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been

Forms of *to do* → did, do, does

Forms of *to have* → has, have, had

Modals → can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would

## 6c

## Verbals

Verbals are derived from verbs but function as other parts of speech, including nouns and adjectives. Verbals may take objects or modifiers,

just as a verb may. The three types of verbals include gerunds, infinitives, and participles.

## 1. Gerunds

Gerunds are verbs that end in *-ing* and function as nouns.

As subject → **Flying** is difficult.  
Gerund

As subject → **Flying a plane** is sometimes difficult.  
Gerund DO

As object → One difficult part of **flying** is knowing about weather conditions.  
Obj of Prep

As subject complement → My favorite activity is **flying**.  
Subj Comp

## 2. Infinitives

Infinitives are *to* plus the base form of verbs.

**Infinitives** → to fly, to see, to know, to sign

As subject → **To fly** is difficult.

As subject → **To fly** a plane is sometimes difficult.

As direct object → When I go on vacation, I want **to swim**.

## 3. Participles

Present participles are verb forms that end in *-ing*, and past participles end in suffixes such as *-ed*, *-en*, *-d*, *-n*, or *-t*. Regular verbs take the *-ed* suffix, and irregular verbs can take a variety of endings.

**Regular verbs** → signed, talked, walked

**Irregular verbs** → flown, hid, run, burst

Participles, whether present or past, function as adjectives, and as such, usually appear before or after the noun they are modifying.

Before noun → The **ear-piercing plane** left the hangar early.

Before noun → The **reconstructed** plane left the hangar early.

Adj

After noun → The pilot, **showing his anxiety**, was taken to his plane.

After noun → The pilot, **shown** to his plane, was anxious to take off.

Adj Phrase



### EXERCISE 3

*Directions: Underline the verbals in the following sentences.*

1. To protect the President, his advisors suggested that he return to the plane.
2. Deciding what was in the best interest of the President, the Secret Service agents barred the media from the plane.
3. As she turned the plane around for takeoff, the amazed pilot wondered what had happened.
4. Minutes later, the staff on the plane were informed that they were to return to Washington.
5. The returning flight seemed to take longer than the flight there.

## 6d

### Regular and irregular verbs

All English verbs, except for the verb *be*, have six basic forms: the base form, the infinitive, the third person singular, the past tense, the present participle, and the past participle. The present participle will always appear with a form of the helping verb/auxiliary *be* in front of it, and the past participle will always appear with a form of the helping verb/auxiliary *have* in front of it.

Base → sign

Infinitive → to sign

3<sup>rd</sup> person singular → signs

Past tense → signed

Present participle → is signing

Past participle → has signed

*Sign* is a regular verb; that is, it takes regular endings for the past tense (*-ed*) and past participle (*-d* or *-ed*). Past tense verbs that do not end with *-d* or *-ed* are called irregular verbs. An irregular verb can take on a variety of endings, including what is called a null or zero ending. Here are a few examples of some irregular endings. A full list is provided for you starting on **page 38**.

Base → cost, forget, say

Infinitive → to cost, to forget, to say

3<sup>rd</sup> person singular → costs, forgets, says

Past tense → cost, forgot, said

Present participle → is costing, is forgetting, is saying

Past participle → has cost, has forgotten, has said

## DID YOU KNOW?

What's with the "irregular" verbs? *Swim, swam, swum. Drive, drove, driven. Sing, sang, sung.* Verbs whose internal vowels change for past tense (rather than simply adding an *-ed*, as in *walk, walked*) are called "strong verbs" and date back to Old English. Though these are some of the oldest verbs in our language, there aren't many left. Most have become weak verbs as English has evolved and simplified. For example, *oke* has become *ached*, *clew* has become *clawed*, and *stope* has become *stepped*.



## Common irregular verbs

Base	Past tense	Past participle
arise	arose	arisen
awake	awoke, awaked	awaked, awoke
be	was, were	been
beat	beat	beaten, beat
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bend	bent	bent
bite	bit	bitten
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
cling	clung	clung
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
creep	crept	crept
deal	dealt	dealt
dive	dove, dived	dived
do	did	done
drag	dragged	dragged
draw	drew	drawn
dream	dreamed, dreamt	dreamed, dreamt
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
drown	drowned	drowned
eat	ate	eaten

## Common irregular verbs

Base	Past tense	Past participle
fall	fell	fallen
fight	fought	fought
flee	fled	fled
flow	flowed	flowed
fly	flew	flown
forbid	forbad, forbade	forbidden, forbid
forget	forgot	forgotten, forgot
forsake	forsook	forsaken
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	gotten, got
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grind	ground	ground
grow	grew	grown
hang (to execute)	hanged	hanged
hang (to suspend)	hanged	hung
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden, hid
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
lay (to put)	laid	laid
lead	led	led
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie (to recline)	lay	lain
lie (to deceive)	lied	lied
lose	lost	lost
pay	paid	paid

## Common irregular verbs

Base	Past tense	Past participle
put	put	put
raise	raised	raised
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
seek	sought	sought
set (to place)	set	set
shake	shook	shaken
shine (to light)	shone	shone
shine (to polish)	shined	shined
shoot	shot	shot
show	showed	shown
shrink	shrank	shrunk
sing	sang, sung	sung
sink	sank, sunk	sunk
sit (to be seated)	sat	sat
slay	slew	slain
sleep	slept	slept
slide	slid	slid
speak	spoke	spoken
spin	spun	spun
spring	sprang, sprung	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck
stink	stank/stunk	stunk

## Common irregular verbs

Base	Past tense	Past participle
stride	strode	stridden
strike	struck	struck, stricken
strive	strove	striven
swear	swore	sworn
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	torn	torn
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
wake	waked, woke	waked, woken
wear	wore	worn
weave	wove	woven
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written

## 6e

## Number and person of a verb

The number of a verb refers to whether it is singular or plural; this depends on whether the subject is singular or plural.

Singular → She **signs** the log each time she **flies**.

Plural → They **sign** the log each time they **fly**.

The person of a verb refers to whether it is first, second, or third person. The verb form usually only changes when the verb is in the present tense and is used with a third-person singular subject.

### Conjugation of the regular verb *to sign* and the irregular verb *to fly*

	Regular	Irregular
1 <sup>st</sup> person singular (I)	sign	fly
2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular (you)	sign	fly
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular (he, she, it)	signs	flies
1 <sup>st</sup> person plural (we)	sign	fly
2 <sup>nd</sup> person plural (you)	sign	fly
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular (he, she, it)	sign	flies
3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural (they)	sign	fly

## 6f

### Tense of a verb

Verb tense refers to when the action of the verb occurs in relation to when the action is being described. Although English has suffixes that mark present and past, we use modals, such as *will*, to mark future tense as well.

**Simple present** is used to describe actions occurring at the present time or on a regular basis.

- She **signs** for her friend who only understands American Sign Language.

**Simple past** is used to describe actions that were completed in the past.

- During class last week, she **signed** for her friend who only understands ASL.

**Simple future** is used to describe actions that will occur in the future.

- During class next week, she **will sign** for her friend who only understands ASL.



## EXERCISE 4

Directions: Specify the tense (present, past, or future) of the underlined verbs in the following sentences.

1. The price of oil dropped this year, but it is still expensive to fly.
2. Moreover, the airlines will add even more surcharges this year.
3. When I went to Jamaica last year, I thought there were already enough surcharges.
4. I am at home contemplating flying to Jamaica again, but those surcharges may stop me.
5. Staying at home, though, usually also costs a lot of gas money.

## 6g

## Aspect of a verb

Markers that represent verb aspects (progressive and perfect) are used to describe actions that are more complex.

## 1. Progressive

Progressive aspect is used to describe actions in progress. The auxiliary *be* plus the suffix *-ing* together mark a verb for progressive aspect.

- She **is signing** for a friend during class today.  
be + *-ing*

Remember that the auxiliary *be* has a variety of forms: *is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*. All of the following sentences use progressive aspect. Note that the main verb (*sign*) is marked by both the auxiliary *be* and the suffix *-ing*.

- I **am signing** for a friend during class today.  
be + *-ing*
- They **are signing** for friends during class today.  
be + *-ing*

Progressive aspect can combine with past, present, or future tenses, as long as the action being described is in progress.

- I **am signing** for a friend during class today.  
be + *-ing*
- I **was signing** for a friend during class today.  
be + *-ing*
- I **will be signing** for a friend during class today.  
be + *-ing*

## 2. Perfect

Perfect aspect is used to describe actions that were or will be completed at the time of another action. The auxiliary *have* plus the past participle marker of the verb is used to mark perfect aspect.

- I **have signed** for my friend in class before.  
have + *-ed*

Remember that the auxiliary *have* has a variety of forms: *has*, *have*, *had*. All of the following sentences use perfect aspect. Note that the main verb (*sign*) is marked by both the auxiliary *have* and the past participle marker of *-ed* that is used for regular verbs.

- She **has signed** for her friend in class before.  
have + *-ed*
- They **have signed** for their friends in class before.  
have + *-ed*

Irregular verbs are also marked with the auxiliary *have* occurring before the verb; however, the past participle form can vary. See [page 38](#) for a list of common irregular verbs.

- She **has flown** three times in Air Force One since last year.  
have + *-ed*

Perfect aspect can combine with past, present, or future tenses, as long as the action being described is described in terms of another action.

- I **have signed** for a friend during class today.  
have + *-ed*

- I **had signed** for a friend during class yesterday.  
have + -ed
- By this time tomorrow, I **will have signed** for a friend during class.  
have + -ed

Progressive aspect and perfect aspect can also occur together.

Present perfect progressive → She **has been signing** for her friend for three weeks now.

Note that the auxiliary *has* and the ending *-en* work together to give perfect aspect to the verb *sign* in the above sentence (in purple), and the auxiliary *be* and the ending *-ing* work together to give progressive aspect (in blue).

## EXERCISE 5

*Directions: Identify each underlined verb by its tense (present, past, future) and its aspect (perfect, progressive).*

*Example: I have wanted to fly to Jamaica for a long time. (present perfect)*

1. Last year, I was going to Jamaica when I learned that I had lost my job.
2. Now that I have a new job, I am going on vacation soon.
3. However, even though I had wanted to go to Jamaica last year, I am having thoughts about going to the mountains now.
4. My company is having a contest, and the winner and three friends will be going to Aspen.
5. Having never won a contest before, I am having second thoughts about buying raffle tickets.

The whole of nature, as has been said, is a conjugation of the **verb** to eat, in the active and in the passive.

–William Ralph Inge

## 6h

## Voice of a verb

The voice of a verb refers to the relationship the subject has with the verb. If the subject is doing the acting, active voice is used. If the subject of the sentence is receiving the action, passive voice is used.

### 1. Active voice

Active voice indicates that the subject is doing something now (present tense), in the past (past tense), or in the future (future tense).

Present → She **pilots** Air Force One for the president and his staff.

Past → She **piloted** Air Force One all last week without a break.

Future → She **will pilot** Air Force One all next week.

Active voice can be combined with both verb aspects—progressive and perfect.

Present progressive → She **is piloting** the plane today.

Future perfect → She **will have piloted** the plane for three years when her anniversary date arrives.

### 2. Passive voice

Passive voice indicates that the subject is being (present tense), has been (past tense), or will be (future tense) acted upon. Passive voice is marked by the auxiliary *be* plus the past participle form of the verb.

Present → The plane **is named** Air Force One (by the U.S. Government) because it is an Air Force aircraft.

Present → Commander John Stewart **is shocked** when the alarm goes off.

Past → The plane **was named** Air Force One because it is an Air Force aircraft.

Future → The newly commissioned plane **will be called** *The Enterprise*.

Note that the direct object takes subject position, and the actor/subject is placed in a *by* phrase. This *by* phrase can sometimes be deleted, and the verb is still passive.

Passive voice can be combined with both aspects—progressive and perfect.

Present progressive passive → The pilot **is being cautioned** today for poor judgment.

Past perfect passive → The plane **had been flown** for three hours when the alarm went off.

Use the passive voice accurately and sparingly in academic writing—its overuse is a pet peeve of many instructors and editors. However, passive voice is frequently used when writing about science and technology, when the direct object should be emphasized, or when the actual subject is anonymous or being hidden.

- The clouds **were formed** by noxious gas.
- Air Force One **was flown** to Israel.
- Your car **was hit**.





## EXERCISE 6

*Directions: In the following paragraph, change 10 verb phrases from the passive to the active.*

Cultures all over the world have signs and symbols for good luck. Many people are familiar with four leaf clovers, but there are many more good luck charms than that! Crickets are considered lucky by European, Middle Eastern, Far Eastern, and Native American cultures. Ladybugs are similarly considered lucky, especially for the person on whom one lands, and scarabs were believed to be a sign of good fortune by Ancient Egyptians. Aside from insects, many animals are valued for being lucky. In Chinese culture, tigers are believed to be important symbols in astrology; elephants are associated with defeating death due to their long life spans. Pigs are included in a German expression that means, "Good luck is at hand." Even inanimate objects are regarded as auspicious: horseshoes, dream catchers, and pots of gold (found at the end of rainbows) are thought to bring luck to the possessors.

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