Workshop 2: Verbs

A verb is one of the eight parts of speech used in sentence structure. According to most grammar books, the main verb usually expresses action of the subject or on occasion can express being or experience.

Main Verbs: In order to be complete, sentences must contain at least one main verb. Identifying the main verb(s) is vital to understanding the structure of a sentence. Here are some tips.

- The main verb will follow the subject of a sentence, except when the sentence begins with the word there in which case the main verb comes before the subject.

  A fly is on the wall. There is a fly on the wall.

  Two pies are in the oven. There are two pies in the oven.

- Auxiliary verbs, or helping verbs, are used with a verb part to create a main verb. Be/Have/Do are verbs that can be both main verbs and auxiliary. Here are examples of their roles as auxiliary verbs.
  
  be:
  - to make continuous tense (He is sleeping on the couch.)
  - to make the passive (The many are governed by the few.)

  have:
  - to make perfect tenses (She has completed the test.)

  do:
  - to make negatives (She does not like green eggs and ham.)
  - to ask questions (Do you bake often?)
  - to show emphasis (We do want to see the show.)

- Modal verbs
  The verbs can, could, would, should, ought to, must, may, will, and shall are not used as main verbs. Each needs another verb form for complete sense. Here are examples of correct usage.

  can:
  - She can be on time if she gets up earlier.

  could:
  - He could make all A’s if he studied.

  would:
  - The book would be more interesting with more characters.

  should:
  - I should complete my essay before the end of the day.

  ought to:
  - He ought to be invited.

  must:
  - A formal essay must not have a comma splice.

  may:
  - He may decide to fly rather than drive.

  will:
  - Will you come to our party?

* Will can also be used as a main verb. (i.e. He willed the ship to sink. He willed her $1 million.)

PRACTICE: Underline the modal verbs once and the main verbs twice.

1. My brother said that I should never allow strangers into the house.
2. Can she move her legs yet?

3. He believes that a person bad hair should shave it off.

4. After I get accepted into college, I will take a nice vacation.

- The **infinite** form (to run) cannot be used as a main verb. It and the **gerund** form (running) must have another verb form for complete sense.
  - Examples: I **want to run** over to the school. (*want* = main verb)
  - He is **running** to the school. (*is* = main verb)

**PRACTICE:** Please write the correct verb after each sentence.

1. He has always enjoyed make new friends. __________

2. The most difficult part of the test was park on a hill. __________

**Verbals** are **formed** from verbs but **act** as adjectives or nouns and are classified as **infinitives, gerunds or participles.** When verbs are modified to play the role of other types of words, they cannot be conjugated. Verbals are sometimes mistakenly used as verbs.

**Infinitive vs. –ing Form**

Only one of the following is correct. **Which is it??**

- She enjoys **to walk** along the beach.
  - OR
  - She enjoys **walking** along the beach.

**Use the –ing form (gerund)**

- As a direct object after the following verbs
  - *avoid, dislike, enjoy, finish, give up, mind/not mind, practice*
  - Examples: She enjoys **walking** along the beach.
  - The girls have finally **finished cleaning** the car.

- As the object of a preposition
  - Examples: I went to the beach **before eating** lunch.
  - Upon **seeing** his new car, he could not speak.
  - His career of **selling** drugs landed him in prison.

- As the subject of a sentence or clause
  - Examples: **Running** is good exercise.
  - **Fixing** broken clocks and watches is his hobby.
  - He knows **copying** the answers from his friend is wrong.

**PRACTICE:** Please underline the gerund and identify its role in the sentence: subject(S), direct object(DO), object of a preposition(OP).
1. Hiking alone can be dangerous.

2. When I realized that flying wasn’t an option, I thought of taking the bus.

3. After realizing the danger there, I suggest we avoid walking through the park.

Use **the infinitive**

- As a direct object after the following verbs:
  - forget, help, learn, teach, train, choose, expect, hope, need, offer, want,
  - would like, agree, encourage, pretend, promise, recommend, allow,
  - can/can’t afford, decide, manage, mean, refuse

  Examples: Don’t **forget to make** a cake for the party.
  I **pretended to be** her boyfriend.
  How did you **manage to receive** financial aid?

- As an adverb (to show purpose or reason)

  Examples: My mother was happy **to visit** with the elderly.
  We were too late **to board** the bus.
  I bought a forklift **to lift** the boxes.

- As the subject of a sentence or a clause

  Examples: **To arrive late** would be unacceptable.
  He thinks that **to spit** in public is rude.

**PRACTICE:** Please underline the infinitive and identify its role in the sentence: direct object(DO), adverb(A), subject(S).

1. If I am allowed to go to the party **to sing**, shouldn’t I also get to dance?

2. To wait three hours in line is not worth the autograph.

3. We bought the dog to warn the neighbors to stay off our lawn.

**Note:** Some verbs can be followed by either the **infinitive form** or the **gerund form** without significantly changing meaning: begin, continue, hate, intend, like, love, prefer, propose, start.

  Examples: I like **to go** to the beach. I like **going** to the beach.
  Do you prefer **to work** here? Do you prefer **working** here?

**Present and Past Participles**

These can act as adjectives:

**Present participle**

1. The **shouting** woman scared the clerk. (The **angry** woman scared the clerk.)
2. My dog watched the **dying** bug. (My dog watched the **green** bug.)

**Past participle**

1. Her **torn** dress was long. (Her **new** dress was long.)
2. The music, sung with emotion, was beautiful. (The music, boring beyond description, put us all to sleep.)

PRACTICE: Please circle all the participles that act as adjectives.

1. The crying girl held a melting ice cream cone and a deflated balloon.

2. If my brother sitting there on the couch sees his broken model plane, I will have a bruised body for weeks.

3. The picture taken by my mom and framed by my dad hangs crooked above our couch.

Irregular Verbs: Some of the verbs we use most often have past forms that are irregular; the best way to learn the past and past participles of these irregular verbs is to practice making sentences (both verbal and written) using those that are troublesome to you. Also, practice quizzes can be accessed on-line at the following links:

  http://webster.commnet.edu/cgi-shl/par2_quiz.pl/irregular_quiz.htm
  http://eslus.com/LESSONS/GRAMMAR/IRREGVBS/Ivtest1a.htm
  http://webster.commnet.edu/grammar/auxiliary.htm