VERBS

Verbs are words that tell you what people or things do. Examples are eat, sit, shout, sleep, dance. Example, the boys are playing football.

Not all verbs show action. Some verbs tell what something or someone is like. They show a state-of-being; therefore they are known as state-of-being verbs. Examples are, to be, to look, to appear, to seem, to become, to feel, to remain, to sound, to smell. The most commonly used state-of-being verb is the verb "to be." The verb to be has various forms: am, is, are, was, were, be, been and being.

Examples

- Mrs Abiola is a gifted dressmaker.
- Her designs are beautiful.

In the above sentences, there is no action. The first sentence tells you what Mrs Abiola is – a gifted dressmaker. The second sentence tells you what her designs are – beautiful.

FORMS OF VERBS

With the exception of the to be verb which has eight different forms, other state-of-being verbs and action verbs usually have five forms – the base or infinitive, which is the form listed in dictionaries, the present tense, the past tense, the perfect tense and the progressive tense. These various forms are determined by whether the verb is regular or irregular. Verbs that form their past tense and perfect tense by adding *–ed* are known as *regular verbs*. Examples are look, kick, pump, call, like, try and wait.

There are other verbs that do not form their past and perfect tenses by adding *–ed*. These verbs are known as irregular verbs. Examples are wear, go, make, win, speak, see, show, come, meet, cut, etc.

Spelling the Present Tense

The base form is a form of the verb to which nothing is added. You form the singular third person present tense by adding an *s* or *es* to the base form. The pronunciation of the *s* or *es* ending changes depending on the sound that comes before it.

Types of Verbs

Transitive versus Intransitive Verbs

The main function of a verb is to say something about the subject of the sentence. The subject, which is usually a noun or a pronoun, is the one that performs the action of the verb. The thig that receives the action of the verb is known as the object. A verb that allows action to pass from the subject to the object is known as a transitive verb. A verb that has a subject but no object to act on is known as an intransitive verb.

Examples:

The man shut the door
Subject Transitive verb Object

The baby slept
Subject Intransitive verb

Main Verbs and Auxiliary Verbs

Sometimes we use action verbs with other verbs known as auxiliary or helping verbs. There are two types of auxiliary verbs – primary auxiliary verbs and modal auxiliary verbs. Primary auxiliary verbs are *have*, *be* and *do*. Modal auxiliary verbs are *can*, *will*, *shall*, *may*, *must*, *ought to*, *would*, *might*, *etc*. Primary auxiliary verbs *have*, *be* and *do* can also be used as main verbs.

Examples

- The dress is very long (is as the main verb)

- The man is playing well (is as an auxiliary verb)
- I have a car (have as the main verb)
- I have bought a car (have as an auxiliary verb)
- I do a lot of knitting (do as the main verb)
- I do write sometimes (do as an auxiliary verb)

Modal auxiliary verbs like *can*, *may* and *will* cannot be used as main verbs. Modal auxiliary verbs are used with main verbs to express different meaning such as possibility, probability, ability, permission, prediction, obligation, offers, and promises.