

Action Verbs Without Helping Verbs

Circle the action verb in each sentence. It will be one word long.

1. Long ago, I learned the strange story of chess and dolphins.
2. Only three dolphins know the way to the secret island.
3. A human and a dolphin play chess on that island.

Action Verbs with Helping Verbs

Find the action verb phrase in each sentence. Underline the helping part of the verb and **circle the action part of the verb in each sentence. Follow these steps:**

A. Use your helping verb list to find the helping verb. Look for the exact words on the list

B. THEN find the action verb.

Each verb is two words long—a helping verb and a main verb make up the entire verb phrase.

4. The radio is buzzing more than usual today.
5. However, it still has given me a headache of epic proportions.
6. I will smash the thing before day's end.

Linking Verbs That Are Forms of "Be"

All eight forms of "be" are linking verbs when they are used alone or when they are used as the main part of a verb phrase. The forms of "be" are these:

am are be been being is was were

When the forms of "be" are NOT the main part of the verb, they are helping verbs.

Find the linking verb or verb phrase in each sentence. Underline the helping part of the verb and **circle the linking part of the verb in each sentence. All of the verb parts in these sentences will be forms of "be." One verb is only one word long, which means it does not have a helping verb as part of it. The verbs in the other sentences are phrases of two words. (Remember that only one word in any verb phrase can be a main verb, so the rest of the phrase must be made of one or more helping verbs.)**

7. You are being much too quiet in there.
8. How many spiders were in his mouth?
9. The class clown is being polite for a change with the principal here.

Linking Verbs Phrases Other Than Forms of "Be"

Find the linking verb phrase in each sentence. Underline the helping part of the verb and **circle the linking part of the verb phrase in each sentence.**

A. Use your helping verb list to find the helping verb. Look for the exact words on the list.

B. THEN use your linking verb list to find the linking verb. Look for any of the four verb forms of the words on the list.

10. The chess tournament must seem unbelievable to you.
11. The dolphins would become notorious without complete secrecy.
12. The reputation of the human competitor has grown considerably over time.

Putting It All Together

There are three tricky parts to finding verbs:

- Spotting the helping verbs
- Spotting the linking verbs
- Knowing when a form of “be” is a helping verb and when it is a main verb

These three things are easier to figure out when you use the helping verb and linking verb lists in the proper order. For any sentences, find the verb this way:

- Start with the helping verb list. It contains all of the forms of “be” as well as the rest of the helping verbs. Compare your sentence to the exact words in the list, and mark any word in the sentence that you find on the list. This does not automatically mean the words are helping verbs, but they will be verbs. (This assumes that you are not marking nouns like “human being” or “aluminum can.”) Keep in mind that you might not find any words that are on this list.
- Continue with the list of linking verbs. Mark any form of the words in your sentence that you find from this list. (For example, “appear” could show up as “appear,” “appears,” “appearing,” or “appeared.”) Once again, this does not absolutely mean the the words are linking verbs, but they will be verbs (as long as you are not confusing the nouns “look,” “smell,” “sound,” “stay,” “taste,” and “turn” with the verbs that have the same names). Keep in mind that you might not find any linking verbs.
- Finish by looking for any action verbs. There is no list for this, because the list would be huge. Use your knowledge of physical and mental actions. Keep in mind that you might not find any action words if you have found words from the other lists.

Once you have completed these steps, look at what you have. If you have found only one word out of all of this, that is your entire verb. If you have found more than one word, you have a verb phrase.

- If you have found two or more words that come only from the helping verb list, you have a verb phrase where one of the words is the main verb, even though it was on the helping verb list.

EXAMPLE: She must have been the winner.

“Must,” “have,” and “been” are all on the helping verb list, but as we know, “been” can be a main verb, too, which it is in this sentence. “Must” and “have” are helping “been.”

- If you find only one word, that word is NOT a helping verb even if it is from the helping verb list. It is the main verb, and it is only one word long.

EXAMPLES: My homework was not very difficult. I finished it in no time.

- If you do not find any words on the helping verb list, your verb will be one word long.

EXAMPLE: Give me your hand.

A verb phrase of two or more words can only be made with helping verbs added to a main verb.

Keep in mind that it is possible to have more than one verb in a sentence. For the time being, however, I will not give you sentences with more than one verb in them unless I point that out to you.

Use the lists as explained above to find the verbs and verb phrases in the following sentences. There are one-word and multi-word verbs, and there are action and linking verbs. Underline the helping part(s) of each verb or verb phrase and circle the main part of the verb or verb phrase in each sentence.

- Both of us heard the sound of a shout in the wind.
- No one has been looking for the missing gold in weeks.
- Every person in school has been late at least once.
- The look on your face remained the same the whole time.
- You have only two minutes left by my watch.

Answers
1. <u>learned</u>
2. <u>know</u>
3. <u>play</u>
4. <u>is</u> <u>buzzing</u>
5. <u>has</u> <u>given</u>
6. <u>will</u> <u>smash</u>
7. <u>are</u> <u>being</u>
8. <u>were</u>
9. <u>is</u> <u>being</u>
10. <u>must</u> <u>seem</u>
11. <u>would</u> <u>become</u>
12. <u>has</u> <u>grown</u>
13. <u>heard</u>
14. <u>has</u> <u>been</u> <u>looking</u>
15. <u>has</u> <u>been</u>
16. <u>remained</u>
17. <u>have</u>