

Ms.M.Ghedjati

Introduction to verbs

Verbs are the words in a sentence that indicate an action, a state of being, or possession. Some examples.

action	state of being	possession
I walk to school.	I feel tired.	This belongs to me
She runs fast.	You look great!	He has good ideas.
It rains in Paris.	We believe you.	She and Tom own a car.
They drink tea.	You and he are tall.	They had two dogs.

In English, verbs have three general forms: the **infinitive** form, the **base** form, and the **conjugated** form. The **infinitive form** of a verb is always preceded by the word **to**. The **base form** is the same as the infinitive but without **to**. The base form of the verb is what you look for in the dictionary. The infinitive and base forms are neutral: There is no tense or person inflected in the verb.

infinitive form	base form
to eat	eat
to drink	drink
to sleep	sleep

A conjugated form of a verb indicates when an action takes place (present, past, or future). Sometimes the verb indicates who or what is doing the action though usually English requires a subject in order to determine who or what is doing the action. Here are some examples of conjugated verbs:

She is tired.	third person singular of BE – simple present
They went home	third person plural of GO – simple past

Tom will call you.	modal verb WILL and the verb CALL – future construction
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Except for the verb BE and [modal verbs](#), all English verbs have only two conjugations in the simple present and only one in the simple past. The verb BE has three conjugations in the simple present and two in the simple past. Modal verbs are not conjugated. Click on the links above to learn.

Like many languages, English has **regular verbs** and **irregular verbs**. An English regular verb is a verb in which the simple past is formed by the addition of the morpheme *–ed* to the base form of the verb. (There are a few small irregularities concerning this morpheme. To learn more, click on [simple past](#).) A regular verb also means that the [past participle](#) form is the same as the simple past form. Here are examples of regular verbs in the base form, the simple past, and the past participle form.

regular verbs		
base form	simple past	past participle
call	called	called
belong	belonged	belonged
anticipate	anticipated	anticipated

For [irregular verbs](#), the simple past is formed by a change in spelling. The past participle sometimes maintains the same form as the simple past, but not always. Other times, the simple past and the past participle are the same as the base form.

irregular verbs		
base form	simple past	past participle
see	saw	seen
think	thought	thought
cut	cut	cut

Some verbs are called **transitive verbs**. These verbs are followed by [nouns](#) or pronouns that serve as direct objects in the sentence. In general, English sentence structure follows this pattern: **subject + verb + direct object**.

subject	verb	object
I	own	a car.

She	loves	Tom.
They	plant	trees.
The tree	has	leaves.

These verbs require a direct object. Without a direct object, the sentences are incomplete.

correct			incorrect
subject	verb	object	
I	own	a car.	I own.
She	loves	Tom.	She loves.
They	plant	trees.	They plant.
The tree	has	leaves.	The tree has.

Verbs that do not require a direct object are called **intransitive verbs**. Here are some examples:

subject	verb
Birds	fly.
Fish	swim.
Tom	snore.
They	agree.

Some verbs in English can be both transitive and intransitive, Here are examples:

intransitive			transitive	
subject	verb	object	subject	verb
They	cook	dinner.	They	cook.
Alicia	teaches	English.	Alicia	teaches.

I	won	a toy.		I	won.
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