



Verbs

The verb is the foundation of any sentence. Without a verb, there is no sentence. In written work, the job of the **verb** is to let the reader know the action of one of the nouns in the sentence.

After locating all the nouns and pronouns in a sentence, find the word or words that tell what one of the nouns did. When this is done, the verb has been found. The noun that caused the verb is known as the **subject** of the sentence.

Example: In a little boat, the old man sat quietly waiting for a nibble.
What are the nouns? They are “boat”, “man” and “nibble”.
Did the boat do anything? No.
Did the man do anything? Yes!
Did the nibble do anything? No.
What did the man do? He sat.
“Sat” is the verb in this sentence, and “man” is the subject.

Some verbs do not describe actions. These verbs talk about how things exist, or what they are similar to. These are called **verbs of being**. Some examples are **be (is, are, were, ...)**, **have**, **seem**, **feel**, **sound**, and **taste**.

Example: That cloud looks like an elephant.
The verb is looks. The subject is cloud. The cloud isn’t doing anything in this sentence, but the sentence says that the cloud is similar to.

Sometimes it takes more than one word to express an action. When this happens, it is known as a **verb phrase**. We can find verb phrases the same way as we find single verbs.

Example: The people in the flood area have moved to higher ground.
What are the nouns? They are “people”, “area” and “ground”.
Did the people do anything? Yes!
Did the area do anything? No.
Did the ground do anything? No.
What did the people do? They have moved.
“Have moved” is the verb in this sentence, and “people” is the subject.



EXERCISES:

A. Underline the verbs in these sentences. All the verbs are single verbs.

Example: I practice the guitar every night.

- 1) Several students wrote letters in class.
- 2) The sun often shines on Vancouver.
- 3) My bus usually runs on time.
- 4) Bill's cat chases birds and catches mice.

B. Underline the verbs in these sentences. All the verbs are verbs of being..

Example: I always feel good after a workout.

- 1) I have several books at home.
- 2) I believe in ghosts and vampires.
- 3) Are you a student at VCC?
- 4) My phone sounds like a doorbell.

C. Underline the verbs in these sentences. The verbs may be any kind of verb, including verbs of being and verb phrases.

Example: Mr. Edwards has left on his tour.

- 1) We lock our doors every night.
- 2) The whole team played very well.
- 3) They have been gone for an hour.
- 4) A strange animal was seen in the area.
- 5) Your mother is a good cook.
- 6) During the noisy storm, she slept soundly in the little room.
- 7) At the end of the day came a very pleasant surprise.
- 8) I don't think you know what you're doing.
- 9) Will you pass the salt, please?
- 10) By ten o'clock, they will have eaten all the food.

SOLUTIONS

A. 1) wrote 2) shines 3) runs 4) chases, catches

B. 1) have 2) believe 3) Are 4) sounds

C. 1) lock 2) played 3) have been gone 4) was seen 5) is 6) slept 7) came
8) don't think, know, are doing 9) Will... pass 10) will have eaten

