

Lesson Fourteen

Different Kinds of Verbs

Aims

The aims of this lesson are to enable you to distinguish between:

- Verbs of Action
- 'Abstract' Verbs
- Transitive Verbs
- Intransitive Verbs
- Verbs describing Movement (Intransitive)
- Verbs describing State (Intransitive)
- Reflexive Verbs

Context

What is a verb? A "doing word", as we have seen - but there are many different kinds of verb. Here we see some of the differences between them and how they affect everyday English.

Different Classes of Verb



The usual definition of a Verb is a 'doing word', i.e. a word describing an action or something being done...

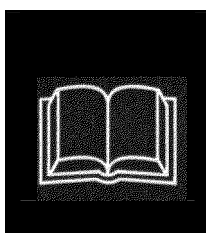
Unfortunately, like most definitions, this one is not entirely accurate. Although it gives a general idea of what a Verb is and does, it falls considerably short of providing a full definition.

For a start, many Verbs clearly do not describe actions at all - the most obvious the Verb to be - these can be called Verbs describing States...

There are also quite a few Verbs which do describe an Action, but this is not very clear: the Verbs *to have* and *to possess* are examples of this kind (I call them *Abstract Verbs*...)

Verbs can be called *Transitive* and *Intransitive*, and in this Section we see exactly what is meant by these terms.

Finally there are *Reflexive Verbs* that we have looked at earlier, (Lesson Eleven) but it would be useful to have another look in the context of different types of Verbs.



We do not intend to look in detail at the tenses and moods of these verbs (For these please refer to the earlier lessons in this course, or the recommended grammar books, **An A-Z of English Grammar and Usage** and the **Oxford Guide to English Grammar**).

In separate Sections we shall look briefly at each type of Verb, and you will have an Activity with each to make sure you understand the differences between them. The Key as usual is to be found after this Lesson

Verbs of Action

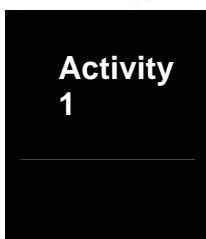
These are the most obvious verbs, and most similar to their definition as *doing words*.

Examples

To speak, to eat, to write, to walk, to lift etc

These are just random examples, but each of them describes an action that is clear and perceptible through at least one of the senses:

to speak hearing; → to eat various senses; → to write
various senses, etc.



Activity 1

Complete the following sentences with a Verb showing a visible action: there may be more than one Answer; try to use the appropriate tense: you may have to check Past Tenses earlier in the Course:

a) At school we _____ our exercises on A4 paper

	<p>b) _____ When I woke up this morning, the sun _____ through the window (Imperfect Tense)</p> <p>c) Every morning, the children _____ the bus to go to school</p> <p>d) Mother _____ her child stories before she goes to bed.</p> <p>e) If I'd known you were coming, I'd _____ a cake.</p>
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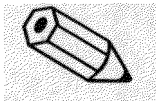
'Abstract' Verbs

'Abstract' Verbs do not describe visible actions, the most important one is 'to be', not only Abstract but it describes a State. (See later Section in this Lesson for Verbs describing States); here are some examples:

to have, to know, to believe, to think, to seem, to learn

Examples

Peter **has** a new bicycle; we **know** this town very well; I **believe** what I am told; I **think** it's going to rain; it **seems** to me they are wrong; at college we **learn** many things

Activity 2	<p>Complete the following sentences with an appropriate 'Abstract' Verb; the Key offers solutions but there may be others equally correct.</p>
	<p>a) We _____ it was going to rain (Past Tense)</p> <p>b) _____ you your tickets? Yes, we _____ them here.</p> <p>c) I don't _____ what you are talking about!</p> <p>d) It _____ to Emma the party wouldn't be much good</p> <p>e) I wish you _____ _____ from my experience (Use anything that fits but in the Conditional Tense)</p>