

Verbs - Action, Linking and Helping

A verb is a part of speech that expresses action and existence.

For example: **Action:** I threw the ball to my brother
I thought about my birthday.

Existence: I am a college student. (also called "state of being or "linking" verbs)

Action and Linking Verbs

An action verb expresses some action. They can be physical actions (to tag, to speak, to touch) or mental actions (to think, to hope, to wonder).

Verbs that express existence are called linking verbs. These connect (or link) the subject of the sentence with a word in the other half of the sentence that describes or identifies it. If you can replace the verb with a form of the verb "to be" such as is, was, were, or if you can place an equal sign there, it is a linking verb.

For example: Andrew appeared tan. Does it make sense to say "Andrew was tan" or Andrew = tan? Yes, so appeared is a linking verb.

Helping Verbs

Helping verbs are verbs that come before the main verb and "help" the main verb. They add more information or make the verb more specific.

For example:

Ashley skated on the pond. (no helping verb)

Ashley has skated on the pond. (one helping verb)

Ashley has been skating on the pond. (two helping verbs)

Ashley should have been skating already. (three helping verbs)

In these cases **skated** is the **main verb**.

The main verb plus the helping verbs is called the **verb phrase**.

The most common helping verbs- be, am, is, was, were, being, been, can, could, have, has, will, would, do, does, shall, should, may, might, must.