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Verbs are words that describe what **people do**, **how they feel** and **how things are** in general. In fact, without a verb, we can't convey our full thoughts properly because, along with nouns, verbs tell a story about what is taking place.

In English, verbs almost always come after a noun or pronoun. These nouns and pronouns are called the subject.

- We **went** to the market. (*'we' is the subject, 'went' is the verb that denotes the action*)
- Jerry **knows** the answer. (*'Jerry' is the subject, 'knows' is the verb that denotes the action*)

We use verbs to talk about [actions](#):

- He **gets up** at 7.30 every morning.
- They **play** football on Saturdays.
- I **didn't want** to work yesterday.

We also use verbs to talk about [states](#):

- The weather **is** very hot today.
- I **don't know** the answer.
- She **doesn't like** classical music.

Depending on their function within a sentence, verbs can be **main** and **auxiliary**.

Main verbs

Main verbs convey **meaning**.

If looking at the examples above, the main verbs are:

- He **gets up** at 7.30 every morning.
- They **play** football on Saturdays.
- I **didn't walk** to work yesterday.
- The weather **is** very hot today.
- I **don't know** the answer.
- She **doesn't like** classical music.

Auxiliary verbs

Auxiliary verbs are functional units that are used with the main verbs to **modify their meaning** and form different **tenses**.

From the previous examples, these are the auxiliary verbs:

- I **don't** know the answer.
- She **doesn't** like classical music.
- I **didn't** walk to work yesterday.

We can use them to form **negatives** and **questions**. For example, in the present simple tense:

Present Simple Negatives:

- I **don't** know the answer.
- She **doesn't** like classical music.

I
You
We **don't** (do + not) base verb
They
He
She **doesn't** (does + not) base verb
It

Present Simple Questions:

- **Do** you know the answer?

- **Does** *she like classical music?*

Do I
you base verb
we
they
he
Does she base verb
it

Past Simple:

- *I **didn't** walk to work yesterday.*
- ***Did** you walk to work yesterday?*

We can also use them to form **different tenses**:

- *He's studying hard for an exam.*
- *I **have** never been to Canada.*
- *We **have been** learning English for two years.*

Linking verbs

Verbs denoting a state of being or becoming are called linking verbs. They link a subject with a complement in a sentence and are followed by either a noun or an adjective.

The common link verbs are:

- *be*
- *become*
- *appear*
- *feel*
- *look*
- *remain*
- *seem*
- *sound*
- *He **seemed** a nice person.*
- *He **seemed** nice.*
- *They **looked** hungry.*

- He **looked** a good father.

Some link verbs are followed by an adjective. Common verbs like this are:

- *get*
- *go*
- *grow*
- *taste*
- *smell*
- **He got** sleepy in the evening.
- **They grew** stronger every day.

Modal verbs

Modal verbs are also auxiliary verbs **modifying the main verbs' meaning**, when talking about *permissions, obligations, requests, offers, suggestions* and more.

- He **can** speak Japanese very well.
- You **shouldn't** eat so much chocolate.
- I **must not** forget my Mum's birthday.

We use modal verbs with main verbs to add to the meaning.

Watch this video and learn what a verb is and what types of them we use in our speech:

See also:

[Phrasal Verbs](#)

[Verbs: The Infinitive](#)

[How to Form Verbs](#)