



Verbs



by Josh Gregory

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A note on the text:
Certain words are
highlighted as
examples of
verbs.

Bold, colorful
words are
vocabulary words
and can be found
in the glossary.

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A New Best Friend



Alex could not wait to see his dad's surprise.

Alex's dad cracked the front door open and peeked his head inside. "I've got a surprise for you," he said.

"What is it?" Alex asked with excitement. He set down the book he was reading and rushed toward the door.

"See for yourself," Alex's dad replied. He opened the door the rest of the way. Suddenly, a furry, brown blur burst into the house.

"It's a puppy!" Alex shouted. "I can't believe it!"

"I know you've been wanting one," Alex's dad replied. "You will have to work hard to take care of him."

"No problem," said Alex. "I will feed him, walk him, and everything else!"

Alex and his dad used many verbs when discussing the new puppy. Verbs are words that describe what people or things do, such as "he **works**," "she **jumps**," or "it **falls**." These are action verbs. Verbs also describe how something is, such as "the flower **is** red." Verbs are one of the most important parts of speech. There is at least one verb in every complete sentence.

The puppy jumped into Alex's lap and began to lick Alex's face. "His fur **feels** so soft," Alex said as he petted the dog.

"What will his name be?" Alex's dad asked.

Alex scrunched up his face as he thought about it. "Well," he said, "the puppy **is** brown. I guess I will call him Brownie."

"Brownie **seems** like a good name to me," Alex's dad replied.



There are many fun things to do with a new puppy.



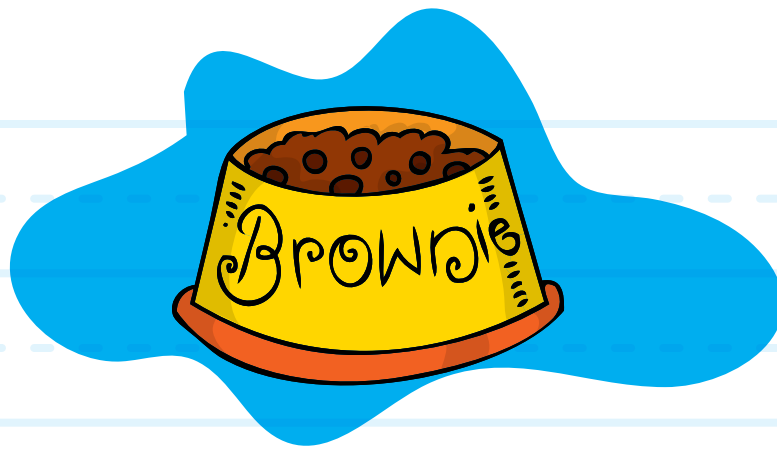
THINK ABOUT IT

Extra Examples

You cannot simply memorize which verbs are linking verbs and which are action verbs. Many verbs can be used both ways! Here are some examples:

Verb	Action	Linking
Smelled	She smelled the flower.	The flower smelled good.
Grew	He grew potatoes.	The potatoes grew big.
Looked	He looked out the window.	The window looked dirty.
Tasted	She tasted the soup.	The soup tasted good.

Most verbs are action verbs. But sometimes verbs connect the **subject** of a sentence to that subject's description. These verbs are called linking verbs.



"We **should** talk about what you **need** to do to take care of Brownie," Alex's dad said.

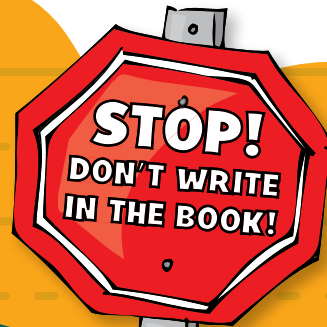
"You must remember to feed him every day. You **should** feed him once in the morning and once at night."

"Got it!" Alex replied.

"You **need** to walk him at least once every day," Alex's dad continued. "You **can** walk him more than that, if you want to."

Some verbs are joined with other verbs to give them a certain meaning. These verbs are known as helping verbs. They don't mean much by themselves. However, they can greatly change the meaning of a sentence. For example, "I **must** eat" means something different than "I **should** eat."

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ACTIVITY

Locate and List

List all the helping verbs you can find in the following sentences:

"You will also clean up after Brownie when he goes to the bathroom," Alex's dad told him. "I do not want to find any messes in the yard."

"I will try to clean up after him," Alex replied, "but I might forget sometimes."

"I hope you are kidding," Alex's dad said, "because I do not think that is funny!"

Answers:
"You will also clean up after Brownie when he goes to the bathroom," Alex's dad told him. "I do not want to find any messes in the yard."
"I will try to clean up after him," Alex replied, "but I might forget sometimes."
"I hope you are kidding," Alex's dad said, "because I do not think that is funny!"

Today, Tomorrow, Yesterday

Brownie hopped out of Alex's lap. The tiny dog began zipping around the room.

"He **runs** fast!" Alex shouted as he chased Brownie. "I can't **catch** him!"

"He **is** definitely quick," Alex's dad agreed. "You **are** no match for him."

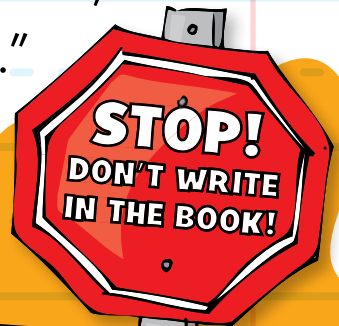
Verbs can explain things that are a certain way right now. This is called the present **tense**.

"He **is moving** as fast as lightning," Alex said. "Look how he **is dodging** around me when I try to grab him!"

Sometimes an action is **ongoing**, or keeps going. Verbs look a little different when they describe these actions. They end in *-ing*.



They are also connected to helping verbs. For example, a person might say, "Brownie runs." To make the sentence describe ongoing action, a person might say, "Brownie is running." The verb *run* becomes *running*, with the helping verb *is* added before it.



ACTIVITY

Read and Rethink

Rewrite the following sentences. Change the present tense action verbs in **red** to their ongoing form.

Suddenly, Brownie stopped running. "Look," said Alex. "He **wags** his tail!"

"Watch out," Alex's dad answered. "He **gets** ready to run again!"

Answers:
Suddenly, Brownie stopped running. "Look," said Alex. "He **is wagging** his tail!"
"Watch out," Alex's dad answered. "He **is getting** ready to run again!"

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"It's time for you and Brownie to go to bed," Alex's dad said. "Tomorrow **will be** a busy day. You **will need** plenty of rest."

"I **will miss** Brownie when I'm at school tomorrow," Alex said.

"Brownie **will wait** for you here at home," his dad answered.

Verbs can also describe things that will happen later. This is called the future tense.

Future tense verbs can be made by adding *will* in front of them.

"He **is going to** be so happy when I get home," said Alex.

"Yes he will," Alex's dad replied. "Now go to bed."



To talk about what you will do in the future, such as going to school the next day, you need the future tense.

"OK," said Alex. "Brownie and I **are going to sleep** now."

You can also form the future tense by a helping verb and the words *going to*.

"Goodnight, Brownie," Alex said as he went up to his bedroom. "I **will be thinking** about you all day tomorrow!"

Future tense verbs can also be ongoing. Like ongoing present tense verbs, they end in *-ing*. The words *will be* are placed before an ongoing future tense verb.

The next day at school, Alex told his friend Luke about Brownie. "I **named** the puppy Brownie because I **noticed** his brown fur," Alex said.

Verbs can describe things that happened in the past. Usually, *-ed* is added to the end of the present tense verb to make it past tense. For example, *name* changes to *named*, and *notice* becomes *noticed*.

"Does Brownie know any tricks?" Luke asked.

"Not yet," Alex answered. "Last night he just **ran** around after my dad **brought** him home."

Not all past tense verbs are formed by adding *-ed*. Some are **irregular**. For example, the present tense verb *run* becomes *ran*. *Bring* is changed to *brought*.

"Brownie and I **were playing** for a long time," said Alex. "I **was petting** him. Then he jumped on the floor."

Ongoing past tense verbs, just like ongoing

present tense verbs, need a helping verb. Ongoing past tense verbs have *were* or *was* in front of them.



ACTIVITY



Locate and List

Read the following sentences. Then list all of the action verbs you notice. Sort them into past, present, and future tense groups.

After school, Alex jogged home as fast as he could. He pushed the front door open. Brownie launched toward him as he walked inside. "Dad, I am going outside with Brownie!" he yelled.

"Don't forget to put on his leash first," his dad called back.

"I am clipping it onto his collar right now," Alex replied. "We will be back in a little while!"

Answers:
past: jogged, pushed, launched, walked, said, yelled,
called, replied
present: forget, put, am clipping
future: am going, will be

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Other Verbs



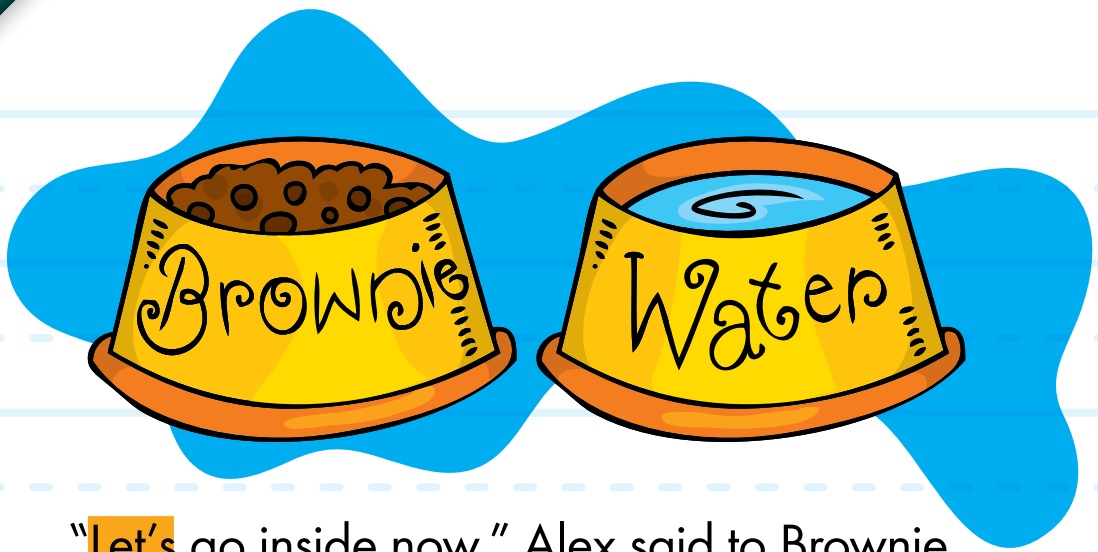
"Follow me," Alex said. He gently tugged on Brownie's leash. The dog wagged his tail and trotted along at Alex's side. "It's time for you to start learning some tricks," said Alex. He stopped walking and patted Brownie on the backside. "Sit," he commanded. Brownie looked up at him. He moved his head to the side. Alex pushed again on Brownie's

backside. The dog suddenly understood what Alex wanted. He sat down. "Good boy!" Alex said with a smile. "Now **roll** over." Brownie began scratching himself. "Hmm," said Alex. "I guess we need to work on that one a little."

Verbs can be used to give instructions or commands. These verbs are usually the first word in a sentence. The subject of a command verb is always "you." However, it might not always be written or said aloud. For example, when Alex says "Sit" to Brownie, he means, "You sit."



Coaches, teachers, and your parents may often use command verbs.



"Let's go inside now," Alex said to Brownie.

"I'm getting hungry. Aren't you?" Brownie barked in reply and followed Alex into the house.

"It's a good thing you came back in now," Alex's dad said. "Dinner is just about ready."

"What're we having?" Alex asked.

"You'll see soon enough," his dad replied.

"Don't forget to feed Brownie and give him clean water."

Verbs can be combined with other words to form contractions. In a contraction, a verb is placed next to another word. Some of the letters are replaced with an **apostrophe**. For example, *don't* is formed from the words *do not*. *Let's* is formed by the words *let us*.



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ACTIVITY



Read and Rethink

Read the following sentences. Then rewrite them, changing the verbs in **red** into contractions.

1. "**You are** doing a great job taking care of Brownie," Alex's dad said as they sat down at the dinner table.
2. "**He is** a great dog," Alex replied. "**I am** so happy you got him for me."
3. "You **should have** seen the look on your face when I opened the door last night," said Alex's dad.
4. "I **did not** expect a dog to run into the house!" Alex responded.



Answers:
1. You're
2. He's, I'm
3. should've
4. didn't



Dogs love to chew on toys.

After dinner, Alex and his dad went into the living room. Brownie followed behind them.

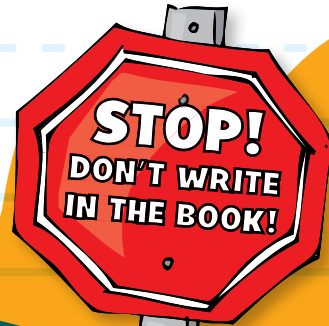
"Here," said Alex's dad. "I picked up a toy for Brownie today." He held up a short rope with handles on each end.

"Thanks!" Alex exclaimed. "Here, boy!" he called to Brownie. The dog scampered over.

"Let's play tug-of-war," said Alex. He showed the toy to Brownie. Brownie immediately snatched one end of the rope in his teeth. He began

yanking on it. Alex laughed as he struggled to win the game.

"I wonder who will win," his dad said as he watched them play.



ACTIVITY



Read and Rethink!

Read the following sentences, and then rewrite them, filling in the missing verbs. Be creative and keep tense in mind.

Finally, Brownie _____ the toy out of Alex's hands. "You _____," Alex said as he _____ backward. "But we _____ again tomorrow!" Brownie _____ his tail.

"Why don't you _____ him a treat?" _____ Alex's dad. Alex _____ over to the kitchen. He _____ the box of treats.

"_____, " Alex commanded. To his surprise, the dog _____ right away. "Wow!" _____ Alex. "You _____ a fast learner!"

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Glossary

apostrophe (uh-PAHS-truh-fee) the punctuation mark used to show letters that have been left out

irregular (ir-REG-yuh-lur) not following the normal rules or pattern

ongoing (AWN-goh-ing) still happening or developing

subject (SUHB-jikt) a word or group of words in a sentence that tells who or what is doing the action expressed by the verb

tense (TENS) a form of a verb that shows whether an action happened in the past, is happening in the present, or will happen in the future



For More Information

BOOKS

Cleary, Brian P. *Slide and Slurp, Scratch and Burp: More About Verbs*. Minneapolis: Millbrook Press, 2007.

Cook, Julia. *It's Hard to Be a Verb!* Chattanooga, TN: National Center for Youth Issues, 2008.

WEB SITES

Between the Lions—Word Play

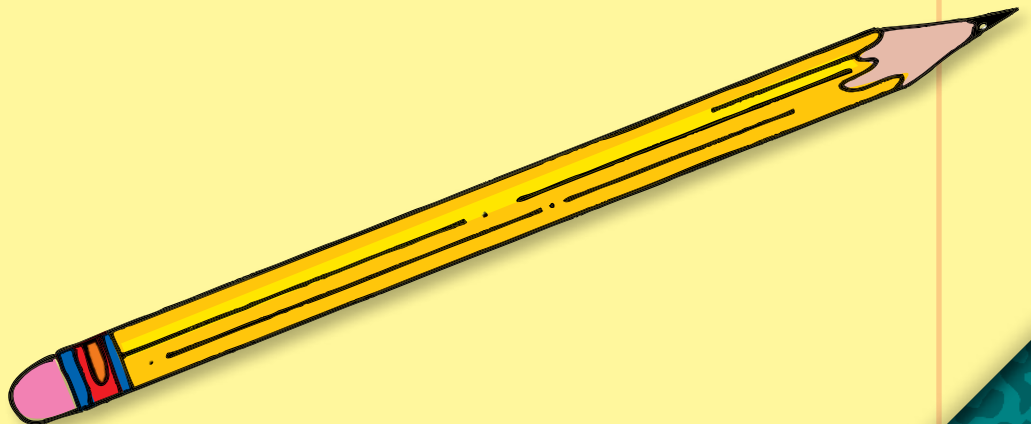
<http://pbskids.org/lions/games/wordplay.html>

Learn some new verbs with this fun interactive Web site.

HMH School Publishers—Verb Power

www.harcourtschool.com/activity/verb_power/index_pre.html

Play this game to learn more about main verbs, helping verbs, and contractions.



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About the Author

Josh Gregory writes and edits books for kids. He lives in Chicago, Illinois.

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The ability to recognize and correctly use the different parts of speech is key to developing strong writing skills. In this series, readers will follow exciting storylines to learn about the roles different types of words play in sentences. Activity sidebars help teach concepts such as tense and correct punctuation.

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