

ENGLISH

Grammar: Verbs



Modal Auxiliaries

Main Verbs and Helping Verbs

What are Main and Helping Verbs?

Let us read the following sentences:

- 1) Anshul walks to school every day.
- 2) Manjunath is eating a red apple.

The word which represents action in Sentence 1 is **walks**; however, in Sentence 2, one word alone does not represent the action. The **phrase is eating** functions as the verb.

When we inspect this phrase, we see it is made of two elements. One word actually carries the main idea of the action, and the other word tells us more about the nature of the action. In the phrase, **eating** is the main verb. The word **is** tells us more about the nature of the main action; hence, it is a helping verb.

Main Verbs

- **Main verbs** are words which represent the primary or main action of the subject.
- They contain the main meaning.

Gerald has prepared a sumptuous dinner for himself.
Meenakshi exercises for three hours every day.



Helping Verbs

- **Helping verbs** are words which lend their support to main verbs.
- They are important to the structure of sentences.
- They also tell us about the nature of the main verb with respect to tense and form.
- They have little or no meaning as compared to the main verb.

Mrs Noronah has been working as a matron for the last ten years.
Karishma is typing a memo to the boss.
Salim does remind me of my elder brother.

Types of Helping Verbs - Primary Helping Verbs

Primary helping verbs are helping verbs which can also function as main verbs. They can be divided into three categories.

- **Be forms (progressive helping verbs):** Verbs like **is, are, am, was, were** are known as **Be forms of helping verbs** or **progressive helping verbs**. They tell us that the action expressed by the main verb is still in progression.
 - **Present progressive:** Rahul **is travelling** to Papua New Guinea as we speak.
 - **Past progressive:** Harsh **was snoring** loudly in the plane.
 - **Future progressive:** Ranjani **will be working** on a part-time basis.
- **Have forms or perfect forms:** Verbs like **has, have, had** are known as **perfect forms** of helping verbs. They tell us that the action expressed by the main verb is finished, complete or perfected.
 - **Present perfect:** Tara **has eaten** the last biscuit in the plate.
 - **Past perfect:** The Marathas **had clinched** a great victory for themselves.
 - **Future perfect:** By this time tomorrow, Yayati **would have paid** us a visit.
- **Do forms:** Helping verbs like **do, does, did, done** are known as do forms of helping verbs. They are used for
 - **Emphasis:** I **do** enjoy watching a good movie on weekends.
 - **Negation:** Neeta **does** not appreciate unsolicited advice from strangers.
 - **Forming questions:** **Do** we know each other?

Modal Auxiliaries

What are Modal Auxiliaries?

- Modal auxiliaries or modal verbs are helping verbs which tell us about the modality or intent behind the verb's performance.

Ritu **must** focus on Mathematics this semester. (Compulsion)
Arun **will** go to the post office. (Future certainty)

- These modalities include **permission**, **suggestion**, **ability**, **probability** or **obligation**.
- Without the main verb, the modals do not make any sense at all.
- The role of these auxiliaries is not fixed; they can have varied functions.

| Modal | Negative form | Tense | Meaning | Usage |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---|
| Can | Can't/ cannot | Present | Ability | She can speak five languages. |
| Could | Couldn't / Could not | Past | Ability | Naresh could carry the luggage back home. |
| Can | | Present | Permission | Can I take another one? |
| Could | | Present | Permission (more polite) | Could I ask you why? |
| Will | Won't, / will not | Future | Certainty | We will leave in 10 minutes. |
| Would | Wouldn't/ Would not | Future | Probability | Ravi would be the inheritor of his father's riches. |
| Shall (used with I and We) | Shalln't/ Shall not | Future | Certainty | We shall overcome all the obstacles. |

| Modal | Negative form | Tense | Meaning | Usage |
|--------|--------------------------|--------|---------------------------|---|
| Shall | | - | Permission | Shall I accompany you? |
| Should | Shouldn't/ Should not | - | Suggestion | You should wear your pink sweater. |
| Should | | - | Obligation | You should complete your work before leaving. |
| May | May not | Future | Possibility (likely) | It may rain today since the skies turned grey. |
| May | | - | Permission | May I? Yes, you may. |
| Might | Might not | Future | Possibility (unlikely) | Though the sky looks clear today, there is a possibility it might rain. |
| Must | Mustn't/ Must not | - | Obligation/ Compulsion | You must complete the journal on time. |
| Must | | - | Speculation | Where is Sneha? She must be in the kitchen. |
| Ought | | - | Moral Obligation | One ought to donate some money to the needy. |
| Ought | | - | Probability | Three cups of flour ought to be enough for this cake. |

Subject-Verb Agreement and Finite and Non-Finite Verbs

What is Subject Verb Agreement?

Read the following sentences:



- 1) The book **is** kept on the shelf.
- 2) The books **are** kept on the shelf.



In Sentence 1, the subject **The book** agrees with the verb **is**. In Sentence 2, the subject **The books** agrees with the verb **are**. In Sentence 1, the subject is singular; hence, the verb is singular. In Sentence 2, the subject is plural; hence, the verb is also plural.

This agreement between the subject and the verb with respect to their number is known as **subject verb agreement or subject verb concord**. In simple words, we can say that when the subject is singular, the verb is singular; when the subject is plural, the verb is also plural.

Examples:

| Subject | Verb |
|-------------|--------------|
| The bags | are packed. |
| Gayatri | works hard. |
| The bottles | were empty. |
| Dennis | cooks food. |
| The drains | are blocked. |
| The police | were called. |

The **subject** of a sentence can be a noun, a pronoun or a gerund. The rules of agreement can be different for each.

Rules for Nouns

- Uncountable nouns** will always agree with singular verbs.

| Subject | Predicate |
|-----------|-------------|
| Lightning | strikes |
| Tea | is brewing. |
| Truth | triumphs. |

- Material nouns** will also agree with singular verbs.

| Subject | Predicate |
|----------|-----------------------|
| Cotton | is cultivated. |
| Gold | is expensive. |
| Bakelite | is a type of plastic. |

- In a collective noun phrase, the headword will agree with the verb and not the noun which follows the preposition 'of'.

| Subject | Predicate |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A bundle of papers | was burnt. |
| A band of musicians | is performing. |
| Bunches of grapes | hang from the vines. |

- However, some collective nouns will always agree with **plural verbs**.

| Subject | Predicate |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| The police | arrive at the scene. |
| The public | vote today. |
| The poultry | are domesticated birds. |
| Vermin | spread infestation. |

- Sometimes, it is the **actions** of the nouns in the collective noun which decides whether it agrees with a **singular verb** or a **plural verb**.
- If the **actions** are **united**, the collective noun will agree with a singular verb.

| Subject | Predicate |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| The posse | was gathered by the sheriff. |
| The army | has launched an attack. |
| The colony of ants | gathers food. |

- If the **actions** are **individualistic** (each member in the group performs separately) or if there is a **disagreement** or **discord** within the group, the collective noun will agree with a **plural verb**.

| Subject | Predicate |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| The brood | cause havoc. |
| The party | spar over trivial things. |

- If the noun is preceded by the phrase '**a pair of**' or '**pairs of**', the verb will agree with the headword '**pair**' or '**pairs**'.

| Subject | Predicate |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| The pair of trousers | is tight. |
| A pair of glasses | rests on the table. |

Rules for Pronouns

- When the subject of the sentence is a **pronoun**, the verb agrees with the pronoun not only in **number** but also in **person**.
- First person pronouns** always agree with **plural verbs**.

| Subject | Predicate |
|---------|-------------|
| I | am |
| I | know |
| I | hear |

- **Second person pronouns** also agree with **plural verbs**.

| Subject | Predicate |
|---------|--------------|
| You | are called. |
| You | were missed. |
| You | speak now. |

- **Singular third person pronouns** agree with **singular verbs**.

| Subject | Predicate |
|---------|---------------|
| She | is confident. |
| He | was upset. |
| It | grows. |

- **Plural third person pronouns** agree with **plural verbs**.

| Subject | Predicate |
|---------|----------------|
| They | are talking. |
| They | have swum. |
| They | do their best. |

- **Indefinite pronouns** take **singular verbs**.

| Subject | Predicate |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| Something | sounds wrong. |
| Someone | calls me on this number. |
| Nothing | is difficult for the hero. |
| Everything | looks beautiful. |
| Either of you | is the new CEO. |
| Much | was needed. |
| None of you | has a choice. |

Rules for Gerunds

- **Gerunds** usually agree with **singular verbs**.

| Subject | Predicate |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Drinking indiscriminately | is dangerous. |
| Apologising for your misconduct | is what I expected from you. |
| Painting | is my hobby. |

Miscellaneous Rules for Agreement

And

- **Two nouns** joined by the conjunction '**and**' agree with a plural verb.

| Noun | Conjunction | Noun | Verb |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| The neighbour | and | the secretary | live upstairs. |

- If there is **no article** with the **second noun**, it means both the nouns function as a **single subject**. In that case, the verb is singular.

| Noun | Conjunction | Noun | Verb |
|---------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| The neighbour | and | secretary | lives upstairs. |

- In the above example, the subject is **singular**.
- This is because there is no article with the second noun '**secretary**'.
- It means the **neighbour** is also a **secretary**.

Along with. As well as. Together with

- Phrases like '**along with**', '**as well as**' and '**together with**' connect two nouns like the conjunction '**and**'.
- But the verbs in these cases will agree with the **first noun**.

| Noun | Phrase | Noun | Verb |
|--------|------------|--------------|------------------|
| ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| Rishab | along with | his brothers | works in Mumbai. |

| Noun | Phrase | Noun | Verb | |
|--------|------------|--------------|-------|------------|
| ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | |
| Rishab | as well as | his brothers | works | in Mumbai. |

| Noun | Phrase | Noun | Verb | |
|--------|---------------|--------------|-------|------------|
| ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | |
| Rishab | together with | his brothers | works | in Mumbai. |

Either...or. Neither...nor

- When two nouns are connected by correlatives **either...or** and **neither...nor**, the verb agrees with the **noun** which is **closest** to it.

| Co.rel | Noun | Co.rel | Noun | Verb |
|--------|------|--------|---------------|-------------------------|
| ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| Either | Rita | Or | her daughters | <u>are</u> the culprits |

What are Finite and Non-Finite Verbs?

Read the following sentence.

Geeta **wants to present** her assignment.

- The verb highlighted in green in the sentence is **wants**; it is the main verb in the sentence.
- Its tense is the present tense.
- It has a subject **Geeta**.
- However, the highlighted phrase in red, **to present**, has no subject of its own.
- It is not the main verb of the sentence.

Verbs like **wants** are called **finite verbs** because they have a tense and a subject.

Verbs like **to present** are called **nonfinite verbs** because they have neither tense nor subject.

Examples of finite verbs:

They **drink** coffee in the morning. (Present tense)
Mrs. Gupta **left** for work. (Past tense)
The planetary rover **will** land on Mars in 2015. (Future tense)

The highlighted verbs in the above examples have tenses.

Examples of infinite verbs:

Ruth loves **to jump** rope.
The rolling pin is used **to roll** out dough.
Please stop **shouting**!



The highlighted verbs in the above examples do not have tenses.

Verbals

What are Verbals?

- Verbals come under the category of **nonfinite verbs**.
- These are words formed out of verbs but function differently from them.
- They perform functions of other parts of speech.
- There are three main types of verbals in English.
 - Gerunds
 - Infinitives
 - Participles
 - ❖ Present participle
 - ❖ Past participle

Gerund

- A gerund is a verbal which ends in **-ing** and functions like a noun.
- It can play the role of a **subject**.

Worrying will not help.
Dieting is essential if you want to lose weight.

- It can also play the role of the **object**.

Don't give up **trying**.
 She likes **writing** letters.
 He practices **fencing**.

- Gerunds can be **single words**.

She kept **thinking**.
 I love **swimming**.

- Or they can be **gerund phrases**.

Sarita loved living in Mumbai.

(Gerund phrase)

Dancing to slow music was something they enjoyed.

(Gerund phrase)



Infinitives

- Infinitives are verbals which are formed when the preposition **to** is added to simple present tense of verbs.

To write

To help

To find

To care

To love

- Infinitives are used to express ideas such as **purpose**.

The shelf was used to stack the books.
She joined her hands to pray.



- They can function like nouns as **replacements** for gerunds.

He learnt to sing and to play the piano.

He learnt singing and playing the piano.



- They sometimes have objects.

The player crouched down **to throw** the ball.

The milkman woke up early **to milk** the cow.

- Or be objects of verbs themselves.

I wanted to leave.

The performer had begun to dance.

- They can be complements to the objects.

He ordered a scrumptious meal to eat.

They waited for the flower to bloom.



- They can also complement adjectives.

This porridge is great to taste!

The convicts were willing to change.

- Sometimes, an infinitive does not take the preposition 'to'. Such infinitives are called **bare infinitives**.

Please help me open the door.

She let her children watch TV.

Split Infinitives

- When one or more markers come between the infinitive marker 'to' and the verb, split infinitives are formed.

It is important to quickly form a stable government.

(Split infinitive)

Please remember to not forget.

(Split infinitive)

Participles

- Participles are words which are formed from **verbs** but have the qualities of **adjectives**.
- Participles are of two types.
 - **Present participle:** Formed out of present tense verbs or '**-ing**' verbs.
 - **Past participle:** Formed out of past tense verbs ending in '**-ed**' or '**-en**'.

Noah saw a flying dove in the sky.

I need a writing pad.

- They can be used as complements for **subjects**.

He is a relaxed man.

Suhasini brought a used car.



- They can also be used as complements for **objects**.

We heard the cat meowing.

I saw the guests leaving.



Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

What is an Object?

- An object is the word **which follows a verb**.
- It can be a **noun**, a **pronoun** or a **gerund** which gets affected by the action expressed by the verb.
- It is a part of the **predicate**.

Amit **chewed** a **bubblegum**.
 Supriya **mended** her **shoes**.
 The dog **found** a **bone**.
 The police **arrested** the **thief**.

The words highlighted in **red** are the **objects** of the **verbs** which are highlighted in **green**.

Now let us read the following sentences.

The lion **hunted** the prey.
 The lion **roared** in its den.

Observe the verbs in Sentence 1 and Sentence 2.

- The verb in Sentence 1 is **hunted**.
- The verb in Sentence 2 is **roared**.
- Add the interrogative pronoun 'what' to the verb (verb + what?)
 - hunted what? – **the prey**
 - roared what? – **?**
- Verbs like **hunted** are called transitive verbs because they have objects.
- Verbs like **roared** are called intransitive verbs because they do not have objects.

Some verbs have to depend on their objects for the completion of meaning, while some verbs can express meaning on their own. The verbs which need the support of their objects are known as transitive verbs and the ones which can stand on their own are called intransitive verbs. The actions expressed through transitive verbs affect their objects, whereas intransitive verbs do not have objects to affect.

I

drank

water.

The verb 'drank' affects the object
'water'.

Exercise:

Read the following verbs and add the interrogative pronoun 'what' or 'whom' to them. Make two columns and write the transitive verbs in one and the intransitive ones in the other.

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| beat | sleep | hold | try | swim | make | cough | kick |
| arrive | die | help | pull | live | go | kill | jump |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Transitive verbs | beat, hold, try, make, kick, help, pull, kill |
| Intransitive verbs | sleep, swim, cough, arrive, die, live, go, jump |

Let us see how these verbs are used in sentences.

Meena **laughed** nervously. (intransitive)

Arjun **sighed** in grief. (intransitive)

Mother **fixed** us a sandwich. (transitive)

The farmer **ploughed** his farm. (transitive)

She **sneezed** thrice. (intransitive)

We **received** a gift. (transitive)

I **read** the newspaper every day. (transitive)

However, some verbs can function transitively or intransitively depending on the context. Here are a few examples:

The Roman Emperors **lived** lavishly. (intransitive)
He **lived** his life honestly. (transitive)

The cuckoo **sings** in the summer. (intransitive)
They insisted that I **sing** a song. (transitive)

I **read** in my free time. (intransitive)
Mohan **read** a book in the library. (transitive)

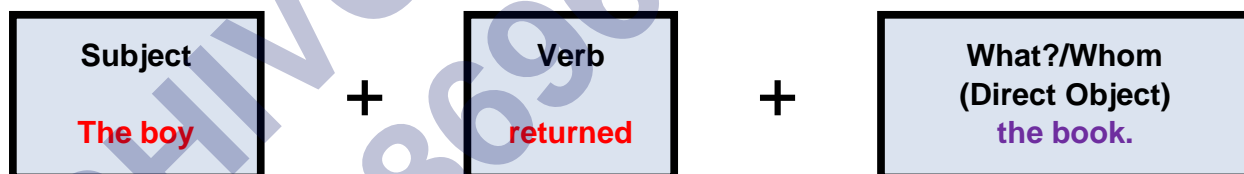
Direct and Indirect Objects

When it comes to transitive verbs, there are two types of objects.

- Direct objects
- Indirect objects

What are Direct Objects?

- **Direct objects** are those that appear immediately after the verbs.
- They are directly affected by the actions of the verbs. They answer the question 'what?' or 'whom?'.



The maid **broke** an expensive piece of crockery.
The villagers **reprimanded** the dacoits.
I **watched** the show.

What are Indirect Objects?

- **Indirect objects** are those that do not appear immediately after verbs, but they are separated from the verbs by **direct objects**.
- They are not immediately affected by the actions of the verbs.
- They answer the question **Preposition + what?/Preposition whom?** (to what?/to whom?).
- They are usually associated with verbs of giving or communicating like **give**, **offer**, **show** and **ask**.

- Indirect objects are either nouns or pronouns and do not form a part of the main predicate unlike direct objects.

| Subject | Predicate (verb + direct object) | Indirect Object |
|---------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Neetha | gifted a necklace | to Smitha |

Shah Jahan built a tomb for his beloved wife Mumtaz.

Mitra borrowed a book from me.

The merchant presented a diamond to the King.

Sometimes, the prepositions before the indirect object may not be evident in the sentence. They may be implied.

| Subject | Predicate | Indirect Object |
|---------|--------------|-----------------|
| Mary | told her son | a story |

Meena gave Mahesh her keys.

Lovina offered her neighbour some tea.

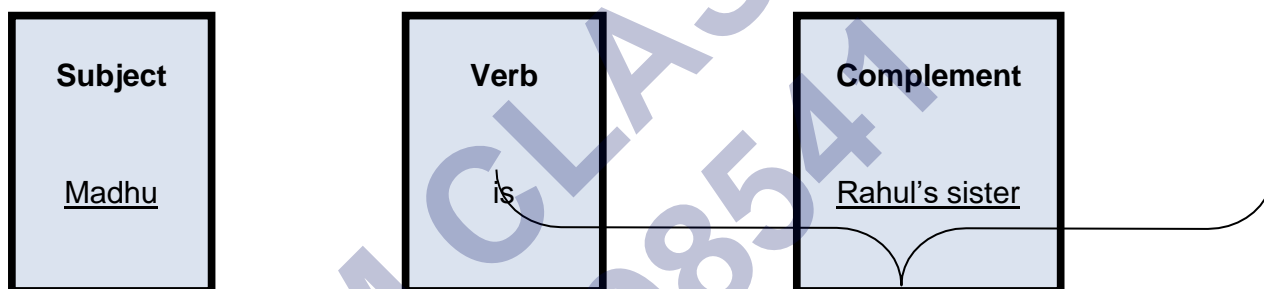
I promised my father a car.

Complements

- Sometimes, the word following the verb may not be an object even if it answers the question 'What?' and 'Whom?'.
- Instead of getting affected by the actions of the verbs like objects do, they tell us more about the subjects or the objects of the verbs.

Subjective Complements

Subjective complements are those words which tell us more about **the subject**.



The complement 'Rahul's sister' tells us who the subject 'Madhu' is.

Ravi is a popular student.

Mr Sreenivas is the new Vice President.

Crystal is upset.

Yusuf looks relieved.

Objective Complements

Objective complements are those words which tell us more about the object of the verb.

| Subject | Verb | Object | Complement |
|---------|---------|--------|------------|
| Mickey | thought | him | strange |

The complement 'strange' tells us more about the object 'him'.

Caligula considered himself **God**.

Meena made her parents **happy**.

His parents named him **Emmanuel**.

They found him **napping**.

Ergative Verbs

As we have studied earlier, the actions expressed by the transitive verbs affect the object. There are certain verbs whose actions affect the subject instead of the object. These verbs can be transitive or intransitive. They are known as **ergative verbs**.

| |
|---|
| The baker baked the buns. (transitive verb) |
| The buns baked in the oven. (ergative verbs) |
| Richa dropped her bag. (transitive verb) |
| Richa's bag dropped to the ground. (ergative verb) |
| They cooked food. (transitive verb) |
| The rice cooked in the open pot. (ergative verb) |
| The referee started the match. (transitive verb) |
| The match started . (ergative verb) |

