

VERB POINTERS

What is a verb?

It is a word that shows action or state of being.

- action: run, swim, jump, taste, fall, dream
- state of being: be, appear, seem, feel

I can make plenty of interesting sentences without nouns. For example:

Don't do that. It's dangerous and if you do it enough, it'll kill you!

He likes her, but I like him more than she does.

Listen closely to what I say and you'll learn to write right.

Not bad, huh? I dare you to make a juicy sentence without a verb. Okay, sentence fragments maybe:

Wow! What a great bike.

Yumm. Good food. More cookies anywhere?

But how long can you live on fragments? Try writing a real sentence without verbs.

There no way we without verbs. Nothing. Without any action words, our sentences . . . dead. No communication.

Action . . . being . . . without them, well, *nothing*.

We need verbs! Here are some ways to treat verbs with respect and to avoid the verb goofs students often make.

Verb tenses

Verb tenses let us know when the action happens.

PRESENT TENSE:

I ace tests sometimes, but not often enough.

PAST TENSE:

I aced the test yesterday.

FUTURE TENSE:

I know I *will* ace the test tomorrow.

Here are the six tenses you have to choose from:

Present tense: I *eat* pizza often.

Past tense: I *ate* pizza last night.

Future tense: I *will eat* pizza later today.

Present perfect tense: I *have eaten* pizza many times.

Past perfect tense: I *had eaten* pizza just before you arrived.

Future perfect tense: I *will have eaten* pizza at least a million times by the year 2010.

Here are the six progressive forms. (Progressive means that the action continues for a while.)

Present progressive: I *am eating* pizza.

Past progressive: I *was eating* pizza when you called.

Future progressive: I *will be eating* pizza at 8:30 tonight.

Present perfect progressive: I *have been eating* pizza all day.

Past perfect progressive: I *had been eating* pizza for three hours when Mom said my eyeballs looked like pepperonis.

Future perfect progressive: I *will have been eating* pizza for five hours nonstop when bedtime rolls around.

Here are the three uses of the emphatic form:

Emphasis: I *do* eat pizza! When I was a kid, wow, *did* I eat pizza.

Questions: *Do* I eat pizza? *Did* I really eat 25 pizzas?

Negatives: I *do not* eat green, leafy vegetables—only pizza. However, I *did not* eat all 25 pizzas by myself.

When to use the present tense:

Present action: I *want* to eat pizza right now.

Action that happens over and over: I *eat* pizza almost every day.