

LEARNING ABOUT VERBS

1

What are verbs?

A verb describes an action.

Picture of Billy 1 walking 2 running 3 jumping

Here is an example. Billy Sparks is doing something. We describe **what he is doing** using a **verb**.

Billy walks

Billy runs

Billy jumps

2

Any verb describes an **action**.

The policeman **ran** after the thief. (*Pic*)

Mary-Jane **eats** an ice cream. (*Pic*)

I **am watching** television. (*Pic*)

HINT: A simple way to work it out is to put 'to' in front of the main verb word eg 'to eat', 'to play', 'to watch', 'to run' [ran], 'to cook', 'to meet'.

3

A few verbs also describe a state of being.

We **are** Australians. (*Pic*)

The idea is that the state (to be, to have, to own, etc) is the action.

4

What sorts of verbs are there?

Notice that the verb can be one, two or even three words. They are **always** together (ie you never separate the verb words from one another). There are

Finite verbs, like:

The policeman **ran** after the thief. (*Pic*)

I **watch** TV. (*Pic*)

These are where there is only one verb word and the verb word makes sense on its own. The word 'finite' here means 'complete' (or making sense on its own).

HINT: If you put a name or pronoun in front of the verb, and it makes sense – that is a finite verb (eg The policeman + ran, or I + watch).

5

Infinitives, like:

We like **to watch** TV. (*Pic*)
Mary-Jane likes **to eat** icecream. (*Pic*)

This is where there is a finite verb (like, love) and a second (or dependent) verb idea (to watch, to see) joined to it the finite verb by the word '**to**'.

RULE: You **cannot** use an infinite on its own. It must always be attached to another (finite) verb.

6

Auxiliary verbs, like:

Sparky **is running** down the road.
Sparky **will meet** you at six o'clock.

We often say things with two verb words. The extra verb words (am, will etc) are called auxiliary (associated) verbs. They make little sense on their own, but paired up with an action word (**am + cooking** or **will + meet**), they tell you something important ('am cooking' tells you that the action is still going on).

7

Participles, like:

I have **eaten** the icecream. (Past participle) (*Pic*)
I am **watching** TV. (Present participle) (*Pic*)

Participles are 'parts' of the verb idea – normally telling you whether the action is taking place now (present participles), or in the past (past participles).

RULE: You cannot use a participle on its own. It must **always** be attached to another (finite) verb.

8

What about time?

Verbs are normally broken up into **tenses**. The word 'tense' comes from the Latin word for 'time'. The **tense** tells you **the time in which the action took place** (or is taking, or will take place). For example:

Pictures of Billy showing him in various situations (related to tense)

I **will** get dressed. FUTURE TENSE (future time)

I **am** getting dressed. PRESENT TENSE (present time)

I **got** dressed. PAST TENSE (past time)

9

You can choose freely between the three tenses. But having chosen, you must stick with the tense you have chosen. So

I **came** to school early. I **played** with my friends. I **said** Hello to the teacher. I **went** into class and **started** work. I **did** English first, and then I **changed** to Maths.

Pic of child saying Hello to teacher

10

Not:

I **came** to school early. I **play** with my friends. I **say** Hello to the teacher. I **went** into class and **start** work. I **do** English first, and then I **changed** to Maths.

Text laid out in box feature (put big X over the top to indicate 'wrong')

RULE: A text will always be in a particular tense (past, present or future). It is most important to stay in that tense. Do not change tenses within the text.