

Verb phrase

A verb phrase consists of a **main verb** alone, or a main verb plus any **modal** and/or **auxiliary verbs**.

The main verb always comes last in the verb phrase.

There are two types of verb phrases:

- Simple verb phrases.
- Complex verb phrases.

Simple verb phrases:

A simple verb phrase consists of a main verb.

The verb in a simple verb phrase shows the type of sentence (e.g. declarative, imperative)

EXAMPLE :

- I **feel** a lack of energy.
⇒ Declarative sentence.
- **Take** deep breaths.
⇒ Imperative sentence.

Complex verb phrases:

A complex verb phrase may include one modal verb and one or more auxiliary verbs before the main verb. A modal verb always comes before any auxiliary verbs:

EXAMPLE :

- You **may pass** your exam if you work hard enough.
⇒ “**may**”: *Modal verb*
⇒ “**pass**”: *Main verb*
- You **should have taken** the morning-after pill.
⇒ “**should**”: *Modal verb*
⇒ “**have**”: *Auxiliary verb*
⇒ “**taken**”: *Main verb*
- The research paper **should have been submitted** by last week.
⇒ “**should**”: *Modal verb*
⇒ “**have**”: *Auxiliary verb*
⇒ “**been**”: *Auxiliary verb*
⇒ “**finished**”: *Main verb*

Meaning of auxiliary verbs in verb phrases:

Auxiliary verbs give different types of meanings to a verb phrase.

Here are some them:

Meaning	Auxiliary verb (+ form of main verb)	Example
Continuous	be + -ing form	I was collecting a blood sample.
Perfect	have + -ed form	We have already learned anatomy.
Passive	be + -ed form	A contraceptive method was prescribed to me.
Interrogative	do + subject + base form	Do you have any children ?
Negative	do + not + base form	My labor didn't last very long.
Emphatic	do (stressed) + base form	Smoking does affect your health in a bad way.