

# Verbs

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## VERB CATEGORIES

# Verb Categories - Introduction

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Verbs can be sorted into several different categories.

Some verbs can be found in different categories, depending on their usage.

Common ones that we will look at here are:

- action verbs,
- stative verbs,
- light verbs,
- phrasal verbs,
- conditional verbs,
- causative verbs,
- factitive verbs,
- reflexive verbs.

# Action Verbs – Examples

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Action, or dynamic, verbs describe an active process.

- The boy *talked* with his parents about school options.
- She *jogged* for over an hour.
- Peter is *driving* to work this week.
- Mary *read* a book about time travel.
- The drummer *performed* a fantastic solo during the concert.
- Bob *swore* when he *hit* his thumb with a hammer.

# Stative Verbs – Examples

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Stative verbs describe a subject's state of being.

- Tony *looks* pleased with himself.
- Debbie *sounds* annoyed.

They can also express emotions, possession or qualities.

- Lucy *adores* her dog.
- He *owns* five houses.
- The sunset *was* spectacular.

# Light Verbs – Examples

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Light verbs have little meaning on their own.

They require other word, or words, to become meaningful.

Common examples include ‘do’, ‘have’, ‘get’, ‘make’ and ‘take’.

- You need to *do* your homework first.
- Grandad’s *having* his afternoon snooze now.
- I *get* a lot of emails every day.
- Can you *make* an exception this time?
- Please *take* off your dirty shoes.

# Phrasal Verbs – Examples

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Phrasal verbs combine with other things, such as prepositions, to make unique meaning.

They are often idiomatic.

- The plane *took off* on time.
- Are you going to *give up* so easily?
- Jane now *looks after* her mother.
- Slow down – I can't *keep up* with you.

# Conditional Verbs – Examples

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Conditional verbs are used in conditional sentences to describe a result that depends on a condition.

- If you *heat* ice, it will *melt*.
- I will *do* the dishes if you *cook* the meal.
- If I had *studied* harder, I would have *passed* the exam.

Please see the section on conditionals for more information.

# Causative Verbs – Examples

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Causative verbs show that something is causing something else to happen.

They are usually followed by a (pro)noun and infinitive verb, which is the action that was caused.

Common causative verbs are ‘make’, ‘let’ and ‘have’.

- My parents are *making* me take violin lessons.
- My uncle *let* me taste his whisky.
- Peter *had* the house painted last week.



# Factitive Verbs – Examples

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Factitive verbs indicate a condition or state that results from the action of the verb.

They help to answer the question of how something was changed.

- Last year, the members *elected* him president of the club.
- The jury *judged* the defendant not guilty.
- The coach *made* Tom the team captain.
- The committee *appointed* Jane club treasurer.

# Reflexive Verbs – Examples

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Reflexive verbs have subjects that are also their direct objects.

The action is both committed and received by the same person.

Reflexive pronouns are often used as the object.

- Andy accidentally *burned* himself while cooking.
- June *pointed* to herself in the mirror.
- I usually *shave* (myself) in the bathroom.
- I wish the children would *calm* (themselves) down a bit.