

JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

VERBS: TYPES, TENSES, AND TIME

Verb--a word used to assert or ask something; usually indicates an action or state of being.

David spoke quickly. (Action)

David seems angry. (State of being)

I. KINDS OF VERBS

A. Linking verbs--These verbs serve as a connection between a subject and its nominal complement or adjective complement.

Forms of the verb *to be* (*am, is, are*, etc.) are the most common linking verbs, but there are others such as the “sense” verbs:

look	appear	prove	smell	become
remain	sound	continue	seem	taste
grow	feel			

Examples:

He **looked** hopeful.

The President **is** a citizen like the rest of us.

Although the report **appears** factual, it **is** actually inaccurate.

B. Transitive verbs--These verbs have direct objects; the action of the verb is directed toward some objective.

Examples: She **gave** ten dollars to charity. (She gave what? *Ten dollars*.)

Last year, they **produced** weapons to sell to Iraq. (They produced what? *Weapons*.)

Transitive verbs can be used in two ways:

As active voice--has a subject that does something to something.

Example: Paul **ate** steak for dinner. (Paul is doing something to the steak--*eating it*.)

As passive voice--the subject is acted upon by something.

Example: The steak **was eaten** by Paul. (The steak was acted upon--*was eaten*--by Paul.)

C. Intransitive verbs--These verbs do not have direct objects; the action of the verb is not directed towards an objective.

Examples: The baby cried loudly.

Lightning strikes suddenly.

D. Auxiliary or helping verbs--These verbs combine with other verbs to show tense, aspect, mood, voice, degree, or manner of action.

1. There are two important verbs that help form certain verb tenses.

The first is the verb *to be* (*is, are, were, am, etc.*) As noted previously, *to be* is a linking verb; however, *to be* can also function as a helping verb.

Example: I **am going** to the concert whether you like it or not. (*Am* is part of the verb *am going*; **am** is being used as a helping verb.)

The second important verb that helps form certain verb tenses is the verb *to have* (*has, had, have, etc.*). *To have* can function as a transitive verb (i.e., *I **have** the book you ordered*), but it also can function as a helping verb.

Example: The office **has called** you time and time again, but you never answered the phone. (*Has* is part of the verb *has called*; *has* is being used as a helping verb.)

Because helping verbs are important in the formation of various verb tenses, it is important to understand how the helping verbs themselves are conjugated (broken down into tenses, formed into tense then further changed depending on person or number).

2. Certain helping verbs are used to express possibility. Some examples follow:

may could might be can would

Examples: I **may take** statistics next semester.

 It **might be** fun to attend that dance.

3. Other helping verbs are used to express emphasis. Several examples follow:

do need will be dared did

Example: I **do need** to go. I'm already twenty minutes late!

 I **will be** there; I promise.

E. When attempting to identify the verb(s) in a sentence, be careful not to mistake verbals (gerunds, participles, and infinitives) for verbs. Verbals are formed from verbs, but do not act as verbs in the sentence. Verbals act as nouns or modifiers.

Examples: **Counting** money daily is a tedious job for bank tellers. (Gerund--acting as a noun)

Viewed in the light of day, the woman's disappearance didn't seem so sinister. (Participle--adjective modifying *disappearance*)

 They agreed upon a plan **to win** the race. (Infinitive--adjective modifying *plan*)

To understand verbals better, you can pick up additional Writing Center materials. (Infinitive--acting as a noun)

II. PRINCIPLE PARTS OF A VERB

Verbs--transitive, intransitive, or linking--can be classified as either **regular** or **irregular**.

A. All verbs have five principal parts:

	<u>Examples</u>
infinitive	to kick, to go
present tense (base)	kick, go
present participle	kicking, going

past tense kicked, went

past participle kicked, gone

The first three parts (infinitive, present tense, and present participle) are made the same way for all verbs. However, the past tense of the verb and the past participle differ depending on whether the verb is regular or irregular.

Infinitive = *to* + basic verb

Present tense = basic verb

Present participle = basic verb + *-ing*

B. All regular verbs add *-d* or *-ed* to the basic form to make the past tense and past participle.

Examples: The prisoner **escaped** from jail. (*escaped* = past tense)

 The prisoner **has escaped** from jail. (*escaped* = past participle)

C. Irregular verbs do not add *-d* or *-ed* to the present tense; instead, to make the past tense and past participle, irregular verbs change in spelling or add some other ending.

Examples: If I **drive** the car today, I'll fill it with gas. (*drive* = present tense)

 If you recall, I **drove** it yesterday. (*drove* = past tense; spelling changed)

 In fact, I **have driven** it three times this week. (*driven* = past participle; ending added to present tense)

D. Irregular verbs can be categorized according to how they change.

1. Verbs whose past tense is spelled differently than the present tense and whose past participle are the same as the past tense.

<u>BASE</u>	<u>PAST TENSE</u>	<u>PAST PARTICIPLE</u>
bend	bent	bent
bind	bound	bound
bleed	bled	bled
breed	bred	bred
bring	brought	brought
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
cling	clung	clung

creep	crept	crept
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
flee	fled	fled
fling	flung	flung
grind	ground	ground
hang (a painting)	hung	hung
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hold	held	held
keep	kept	kept
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
read	read (said "red")	read
rend	rent	rent
say	said	said
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
shoe	shod	shod
shoot	shot	shot
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
slink	slunk	slunk
speed	sped	sped
spend	spent	spent
spin	spun	spun
stand	stood	stood
stick	stuck	stuck
sting	stung	stung
string	strung	strung
sweep	swept	swept
swing	swung	swung
teach	taught	taught
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
weep	wept	wept
win	won	won
wind	wound	wound

Example: Please **feed** the dog before seven o'clock. (*feed* = present tense)

I **fed** him ten minutes ago. (*fed* = past tense)

Well, if you **have fed** him already, then don't give him anything at seven. (*fed* = past participle)

2. Verbs whose past tense is spelled differently than the present tense and whose past participle is formed by adding *-n* or *-en* to the base word or past tense.

BASE	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
be	was	been
bear	bore	borne
bite	bit	bitten
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
choose	chose	chosen
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
forsake	forsook	forsaken
freeze	froze	frozen
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
know	knew	known
ride	rode	ridden
rise	rose	risen
see	saw	seen
shake	shook	shaken
speak	spoke	spoken
slay	slew	slain
steal	stole	stolen
stride	strode	stridden
swear	swore	sworn
take	took	taken
tear	tore	torn
throw	threw	thrown
wear	wore	worn
weave	wove	woven
write	wrote	written

Two verbs show a unique pattern. Like many other verbs, they are derived from Old English strong verbs, but have evolved differently.

come came come

run ran run

Examples: Some flower bulbs **freeze** and die if left in the ground through winter. (*freeze* = present tense)

Last year, I forgot to take out these sensitive bulbs and they **froze**. (*froze* = past tense)

They **had frozen** during the cold spells and then thawed and decomposed when the weather grew warmer in early spring. (*frozen* = past participle)

3. Verbs that show a change in vowel, both in the past tense and the past participle.

<u>BASE</u>	<u>PAST TENSE</u>	<u>PAST PARTICIPLE</u>
begin	began	begun
fly	flew	flown
lie	lay	lain
ring	rang	rung
swim	swam	swum

Examples: **Ring** the doorbell, Janet. (*ring* = present tense)

I **rang** it, so someone should come to the door soon. (*rang* = past tense; vowel changed from *i* to *a*)

Maybe if I **had rung** it harder, we wouldn't still be standing here. (*rung* = past participle; vowel changed from *i* to *u*)

4. Verbs that show no changes; each form consists of the same word as the base.

bet cost let shut bid cut put split burst hit

set cast hurt shed thrust spread

Example: Who **split** the wood this morning? (*split* present tense)

I did, and I **split** it yesterday, too. (*split* = past tense)

After tonight, I **will have split** the wood more than any of you, so don't expect me to do it next week. (*split* = past participle)

5. Certain irregular verbs are currently undergoing changes. Forms previously used are gradually being altered or replaced by new forms (or forms previously considered ungrammatical). A list follows; the newer form is in parentheses ().

<u>BASE</u>	<u>PAST TENSE</u>	<u>PAST PARTICIPLE</u>
abide	abode (abided)	abode (abided)
awake	awoke (awaked)	awoke (awaked, awoken)
beat	beat	beaten (beat)
bereave	bereaved (bereft)	bereaved (bereft)
beseech	beseeched (besought)	beseeched (besought)
bid [command]	bade (bid)	bidden (bid, bade)
bide	bode (bided)	bided
broadcast	broadcast (broadcasted)	broadcast (broadcasted)
chide	chid (chided)	chidden (chided, chid)
cleave [adhere]	cleave (clove)	cleaved (clove)
cleave [split]	cleaved (cleft, clove)	cleaved (cleft, cloven)
clothe	clothed (clad)	clothed (clad)
crow	crowed (crew [Brit.])	crowed
dive	dived (dove)	dived
drink	drank	drunk (drank)
fit	fitted (fit)	fitted (fit)
forget	forgot	forgotten (forgot)
get	got	got (gotten)
heave	heaved (hove)	heaved (hove)
hew	hewed	hewed (hewn)
hide	hid	hidden (hid)
kneel	knelt (kneeled)	knelt (kneeled)
knit	knitted (knit)	knitted (knit)
light	lighted (lit)	lighted (lit)
mow	mowed	mowed (mown)
quit	quit (quitted)	quit (quitted)
prove	proved	proved (proven)
rid	rid (ridded)	rid (ridded)
saw	sawed	sawed (sawn)
seethe	seethed	seethed (sodden)
sew	sewed	sewed (sewn)
shave	shaved	shaved (shaven)
shear	sheared	sheared (shorn)
shine	shone (shined)	shone (shined)
show	showed	showed (shown)
shrink	shrank (shrunken)	shrank (shrunken)
sing	sang (sung)	sung
smite	smote	smitten (smote)
sow	sowed	sowed (sown)
speed	sped (speeded)	sped (speeded)
spit	spit (spat)	spit (spat)
spring	sprang (sprung)	sprung
stink	stank (stunk)	stunk
strew	strewed	strewed (strewn)
strike	struck	struck (stricken)

strive	strove (strived)	striven (strived)
sweat	sweat (sweated)	sweat (sweated)
swell	swelled	swelled (swollen)
thrive	throve (thrived)	thriven (thrived)
tread	trod	trodden (trod)
wake	waked (woke)	waked (woke, woken)
wed	wedded (wed)	wedded (wed)
wet	wet (wetted)	wet (wetted)
work	worked	worked (wrought)

III. CONJUGATION OF VERBS

Verb conjugation--a systematic method of arranging verb forms primarily in terms of

tense (time reference)
 person (first person, second person, third person)
 number (singular, plural)

A. **Tense**--the English language allows for many subtle time distinctions. Therefore, in addition to the five principal parts of a verb, there are various other verb tenses. Each verb tense identifies a particular moment or period in time. Several verb tenses are formed with the use of helping verbs, as noted in Part I, D.

1. Present Time:

a. **Present tense**--indicates something that happens or can happen in the immediate present. (*I **eat** at this time every evening.*)

Formula: No change = immediate present

b. **Present progressive tense**--indicates something that is going on at the present time. (*I **am eating** dinner, so please don't disturb me.*)

Formula: *to be* verb + present participle = continuing present

2. Past Time:

a. **Past tense**--indicates something that happened at a particular time in the past. (*I **ate** twenty minutes ago.*)

Formula: add *-ed* to present tense or irregular form

b. **Past progressive tense**--indicates something going on during a time in the past. (*I **was eating** dinner when someone knocked on the door.*)

Formula: past *to be* verb + present participle = continuing period in past

c. **Perfect tense**--indicates something that has happened at various times in the past. (*I **have eaten** dinner at this same time for many years.*)

Formula: past participle + *have* or *has* = past tense extending to future

d. **Past perfect tense**--indicates something that happened before some time in the-past. (*I **had eaten** dinner at an earlier hour before my habits changed.*)

Formula: past participle + *had* = in the past before another past time

3. Future Time:

a. **Future tense**--indicates something that can happen at some time in the future. (*I **will eat** at this time tomorrow night, too.*)

Formula: *will* + present tense = future time extending from the present

b. **Future perfect tense**--indicates something that will take place before some particular time in the future. (*I **will have eaten** by the time you get home from work.*)

Formula: future tense of *have* + past participle = past time in some future time

A verb, then, has many tenses. Furthermore, each tense can be written in six different ways according to person and number.

B. **Person**--a writer can write in first person, second person, or third person.

1. First person = the one speaking
2. Second person = the one spoken to
3. Third person = the one spoken about

C. **Number**--The verb changes to show whether one person or thing is doing the action or is being acted upon, or more than one person or thing is doing the action or is being acted upon.

Person and number are combined in the following way:

First person, singular = *I* + verb

Second person, singular = *you* + verb

Third person, singular = *he, she, it* + verb

First person, plural = *we* + verb

Second person, plural = *you* + verb

Third person, plural = *they* + verb

A singular subject takes the appropriate singular verb form; a plural subject takes the appropriate plural verb form. This is referred to as subject-verb agreement.

Examples:

John looks sick. (Third person, singular--*he*; third person singular verb form--*looks*)

His brothers look sick, too. (Third person plural--*they*; third person plural verb form--*look*)

We were attacked by wild dogs. (First person, plural--*we*; first person, plural verb form--*were*)

I was attacked by wild dogs. (First person, singular--*I*; first person singular verb form--*was*)

NOTE: Do not confuse noun plurals with verb plurals. The plural form of a noun is formed differently than the plural form of a verb.

D. To summarize, all three--tense, number, and person--must be considered when conjugating a verb. The format is as follows:

CONJUGATIONS OF VERBS

Following is a complete conjugation of the verb *to call* in order to illustrate how a tense is "broken down" or conjugated. Also noted are "formulas" for forming each tense.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
Tense (present, past, future, ...)	
1. First person	First person
2. Second person	Second person
3. Third person	Third person

Regular verb: *to call* (active voice--subject does something to something)

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
Present Tense = Base Verb	
1. I call	We call
2. You call	You call
3. He, she, it calls	They call

Progressive Present Tense = *am/is/are* + present participle

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. I am calling | We are calling |
| 2. You are calling | You are calling |
| 3. He, she, it is calling | They are calling |

Past Tense = Base verb with *-ed* ending

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1. I called | We called |
| 2. You called | You called |
| 3. He, she, it called | They called |

Progressive Past Tense = *was/were* + present participle

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. I was calling | We were calling |
| 2. You were calling | You were calling |
| 3. He, she, it was calling | They were calling |

Future Tense = *shall/will* + present tense

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1. I shall call | We shall call |
| 2. You will call | You will call |
| 3. He, she, it will call | They will call |

Present Perfect Tense = *have/has* + past participle

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. I have called | We have called |
| 2. You have called | You have called |
| 3. He, she, it has called | They have called |

Past Perfect Tense = *had* + past participle

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. I had called | We had called |
| 2. You had called | You had called |
| 3. He, she, it had called | They had called |

Future Perfect Tense = *shall have/will have* + past participle

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I shall have called | We shall have called |
| 2. You will have called | You will have called |
| 3. He, she, it will have called | They will have called |

Regular verb: *to call* (passive voice--subject is acted upon by something)

Singular

Plural

Present Tense = *am/is/are* + past participle

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. I am called | We are called |
| 2. You are called | You are called |
| 3. He, she, it is called | They are called |

Past Tense = *was/were* + past participle

1. I was called
2. You were called
3. He, she, it was called

We were called
You were called
They were called

Future Tense = *shall be/will be* + past participle

1. I shall be called
2. You will be called
3. He, she, it will be called

We shall be called
You will be called
They will be called

Present Perfect Tense = *have/has been* + past participle

1. I have been called
2. You have been called
3. He, she, it has been called

We have been called
You have been called
They have been called

Past Perfect Tense = *had been* + past participle

1. I had been called
2. You had been called
3. He, she, it had been called

We had been called
You had been called
They had been called

Future Perfect Tense = *shall/will have been* + past participle

1. I shall have been called
2. You will have been called
3. He, she, it will have been called

We shall have been called
You will have been called
They will have been called

Two important auxiliary (helping) verbs that help form certain verb tenses are as follows:

verb: *to be*

Singular

Plural

Present Tense

1. I am
2. You are
3. He, she, it is

We are
You are
They are

Past Tense

1. I was
2. You were
3. He, she, it was

We were
You were
They were

Future Tense

1. I shall be
2. You will be
3. He, she, it will be

We shall be
You will be
They will be

Present Perfect Tense

1. I have been
2. You have been
3. He, she, it has been

We have been
You have been
They have been

Past Perfect Tense

1. I had been
2. You had been
3. He, she, it had been

We had been
You had been
They had been

verb: to have

Singular

Plural

Present Tense

1. I have
2. You have
3. He, she, it has

We have
You have
They have

Past Tense

1. I had
2. You had
3. He, she, it had

We had
You had
They had

Future Tense

1. I shall have
2. You will have
3. He, she, it will have

We shall have
You will have
They will have