

Verbs

A verb is a word or phrase that describes an action, condition or experience.

This should be easy, right? All right, **let us check you out.**

Read the following paragraph and pick the right verb from the brackets.



Harshad, along with his brother Ketan, (plan, plans) to surprise their mother for her birthday. She is usually so tired after work that she has to (lay, lie) down and rest for half an hour before making dinner. What the boys have in mind (was, is) a home-cooked meal of their own. "Where (are, is) the set of wine glasses?" (ask, asks) Harshad. "Most of the glasses (are, is) in the box, but one is (broke, broken)." After (making, to make) burgers and baked potatoes, they call their mother. She is astonished. "I wish Daddy (was, were) in town to see what a beautiful job you've done!" Neither the boys nor their mother (try, tries) to hide their delight when they bring out the dessert. The dessert (are, is) ice cream sundaes.



Did you pick these verbs?

Plans, lie, is, is, asks, are, broken, making, were, tries, is.

If you did, well, you can smile. You seem to know your verbs.

WATCH OUT!			
	Common errors	The correct form	Why? (The theory)
1	I have come yesterday .	I came yesterday.	The sentences mix up past and present tenses. In these cases, the verb should be in the simple past tense.
2	He has left a few minutes ago .	He left a few minutes ago.	
3	He has met me last winter .	He met me last winter.	
4	I had come just now.	I have come just now .	The use of " just now " is correct only in the present perfect tense .
5	He was leaving just now.	He has left just now .	
6	He has already went home.	He has already gone home.	The following adverbs of time are always used with the present perfect tense, not with the simple past tense: Already, yet, since, until now, so far .
7	You did not do any work so far.	You have not done any work so far.	
8	The train left before I had reached the station.	The train had left before I reached the station.	Here, there are two actions occurring at two points of time in the past. The action in the near past is written in simple past tense and that occurring in the distant past, in past perfect tense.
9	The patient died before the doctor reached .	The patient had died before the doctor reached .	
10	He had came and I went.	He came and I went .	When two things happen (almost) simultaneously, then past simple tense is used for both of them.

Have any cause for "has" or "had"?

"Have", "has" and "had" are simple chaps but can get quite mischievous if you are not watchful. Let us get to know them better.

In some sentences, the subject does not act himself but behaves like the boss – he gets the work done by others. Such sentences are constructed as below with the help of **have, has** or **had**, used as causative verbs. Here are some examples:

1. **I had** him **punished** for his fault.
2. He **had** a house **built**.
3. **I have** my essays **corrected** by my teachers.
4. **I shall have** my letter **typed**.
5. They **can have** their furniture **repaired**.
6. I **got** him punished.
7. I **shall get** my essay **corrected**.
8. He **gets** his furniture **repaired** every year.
9. **I am getting** my house **whitewashed**.
10. He **made him** run away.
11. I **got him** dismissed.
12. He **had** the **orders** passed.

When have gives, takes or does!

When "have" means **give, take** or **do**, it can be used in the **present continuous tense** also.

1. We **are having** a party today.
2. They **are having** very difficult times these days.

But we should not write sentences like the following:

1. **Incorrect: I am having** a book.
2. **Incorrect: She is having** a small baby.
3. **Incorrect: This book is having** six chapters.

Have some hope!

There are some verbs that, if used in **past perfect tense**, would indicate **action left incomplete**. These verbs express **hope, wish, desire** and **imagination**. Examples: **Wish, hope, want, expect, intend, suppose, think**. Also remember that an **infinitive** is used after the **past perfect form** of these verbs.

1. **I had expected to find** him here. (But could not find him here.)
2. She **had hoped to pass** in the first division. (But could not)
3. **I had wished to buy** a new car. (But could not)

Perfect infinitives can also be used in place of **simple infinitives**:

1. I had expected **to have found** him here.
2. She had hoped **to have passed** in the first division.
3. I had wished **to have bought** a new car.

Had a good time?

As a main verb, had means *possess, experience* etc. **Had** is the past tense of **have**.

For example, "I **had** a good time" means "I **experienced** a good time."

This is one sentence that continues to confuse students:

I **have had** a good time.



Is this right? Have and had together? Past tense and present tense as neighbours?

Well, we need not get confused because we know "**have**" is both a main and an auxiliary verb. "**Had**" is the main verb meaning "**experienced**". "**Have**" is the auxiliary used for making perfect tense. Let us rewrite the above sentence.

I have experienced a good time.

Ha! Now it is not so bad, is it?

Sometimes **have had, has had** or **had had** are used together. Do not get spooked if you see sentences like the following:

1. **I have had** my breakfast.
2. She **has had** her breakfast.
3. She **had had** her breakfast very early.
4. He **will have had** his breakfast by now.

Have an obligation

1. I **have** to go to office.



Now, that is an obligation, plain and simple. Come what may, I better go.

Suppose I do not have to go to office. How can we turn this obligation around into a negative? Here are two ways:

1. **I haven't** to go to office *today*.
2. **I don't have** to go to office *on a holiday*.



Had I ...

Sometimes "had" is used to express **condition, wish** or **imagination**.

1. **Had** I been a king!
2. **Had** I seen the Olympic games!
3. **Had** I won a lottery!
4. He behaved as if he **had been** my master.

You have been a "has-been"?



These sentences show that some action **started in the past** and also **ended in the past**, and is **not continuing in the present**.

1. I have been a Professor. (I am not a Professor now.)
2. I have been to England. (I am not there now.)
3. He has been a sportsman. (Now he is not.)
4. He is a bit of a has-been. (Do you think you are praising him when you say this? Why?)

When "do" does it better!

Special effect

It sometimes happens that we want to change the order of words to gain some particular effect. The use of **do** then comes handy.

1. He knows little of the harm being caused to him.
2. Little does he *know* of the harm being caused to him.

Don't you think there is a little more drama in the second version of the sentence?

To avoid repetition

1. **Repetitive:** He sings well and she sings well.
2. **Better:** *He sings well and so does she.*

To add emphasis

1. **Normal:** You **made** a mistake.
2. **Forceful:** You **did** make a mistake.

To make a request or invitation more persuasive

1. **Normal:** Come to the party.
2. **More persuasive:** **Do** come to the party.

Not "has gone"

Sometimes "Go" is used in the sense of "Lose". In that case we should write **is gone** or **was gone**, or **is lost** or **was lost**, not **has** or **had gone** or **lost**.

1. **Incorrect:** My suitcase **has lost**.
2. **Correct:** My suitcase **is lost**.
3. **Incorrect:** My suitcase **has gone** in the train.
4. **Correct:** My suitcase **was gone** in the train.

Ought to do

Ought to is used to express moral obligation, desirability or strong probability. Remember that **ought** is always followed by an infinitive with **to**.

1. We **ought** to serve our fellowmen. (Moral obligation)
2. You **ought** to get married now. (Desirability)
3. It **ought** to rain. (Strong probability)

Would you please?

Habitual action: Would is used to express habitual action in the past. Here, **would** takes the place of **used to**. For example, She **would** teach the children every day.

Express a condition

1. She **would** be killed if she goes. (*Future*) (There is **some possibility** of her going.)
2. She **would** be killed if she went. (*Future*) – (There is **no possibility** of her going.)
3. She **would** have been killed if she had gone. (*Past*) – (She didn't go.)



Polite request: **Would** you lend me your pen?

Probability: The match **would** be over by now.

Strong desire: I **wish** I **would** be at home now.

Need you dare?

These are four words we use regularly. These are also the words we are likely to misuse. Meet **need**, **needn't**, **dare** and **daren't** in their various forms.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. I need a pen. | 2. You/they need a pen. |
| 3. He needs a pen. | 4. I/you/he/they needed a pen. |
| 5. I don't need a pen. | 6. She doesn't need a pen. |
| 7. He need not fear me. | 8. He need never fear me. |
| 9. He need hardly take my help. | 10. He need scarcely demand any more help. |
| 11. Need he go there? | 12. Need he try again? |
| 13. Do I need to go with him? | 14. Does he need to go with you? |
| 15. Did you need to behave like this? | 16. You needn't work so hard. |
| 17. He needn't go there. | 18. They needn't go there. |
| 19. He needn't have gone there. (unnecessary) | 20. He needn't have behaved like this. (improper) |
| 21. He dares me to climb to the peak. | 22. I dare you to compete with me. |
| 23. They dare me to move this boulder. | 24. He dare not fight with me. |
| 25. I dare not stand before you. | 26. They dare not question my integrity. |
| 27. He dare hardly speak before me. | 28. Dare he speak before you? |
| 29. Dare he repeat the mistake? | 30. Does he dare to challenge you? |
| 31. Did he dare to argue with you? | 32. Do I dare to stand before him? |
| 33. He daren't come before me. | 34. I daren't go there alone. |
| 35. He daren't have gone alone in the deep wood. | 36. You daren't have challenged him like this. |

WATCH OUT!

	Common errors	The correct form	Why? (The theory)
1	He has and will play cricket.	He has played , and will play , cricket.	When there is only one auxiliary to two principal verbs, it should correctly associate with both.
2	His child has been selected for interview while others failed to qualify.	His child has been selected for interview while others have failed to qualify.	
3	He neither has nor will help you.	He neither has helped nor will help you.	
4	He has not and should not tell a lie.	He has not told and should not tell a lie.	
5	The poachers were caught yesterday when they fell trees illegally.	The poachers were caught yesterday when they felled trees illegally.	Verbs like fall , lie , rise and sit are made transitive by a slight change in their spelling. The transitive is the causative of the corresponding intransitive verbs.
6	He laid still on the carpet.	He lay still on the carpet.	
7	Rise your hands if you are in support of this candidate.	Raise your hands if you are in support of this candidate.	
8	The books are laying on the table.	The books are lying on the table.	
9	Please lie these coats across my bed for now.	Please lay these coats across my bed for now.	
10	He has laid in bed all day; I wonder if he's sick.	He has lain in bed all day; I wonder if he's sick.	



When a question tags along!

Question tags are part of normal conversations. But do you get it right every time? You should check it out, **shouldn't you?**

1. You love me, **don't you?**
2. Let us now play, **shall we?**
3. You don't love me, **do you?**
4. Don't go there, **will you?**
5. He is a good man, **isn't he?**
6. He is not a good man, **is he?**
7. He doesn't work hard, **does he?**
8. He works hard, **doesn't he?**
9. He **rarely** comes here, **does** he?
10. **Few** people are interested in this scheme, **are** they?
11. No one will come, will he / will they?
12. Any one can come, can't he / can't they?
13. All of us will go, won't we?
14. None of us has done it, have we?
15. All of you can do it, can't you?
16. None of you can do it, can you?
17. All of them were present, weren't they?
18. None of them were present, were they?
19. Everything is lost, isn't it?
20. Nothing is lost, is it?
21. I am only a student, aren't I?
22. I am not a student, am I?
23. There is no good college, is there?
24. There is a good college, isn't there?
25. I need a book, don't I?
26. He needs a book, doesn't he?
27. He used to live here, didn't he?
28. Ring the bell, **will you?**
29. Don't ring the bell, will you?
30. Let us now go for dinner, shall we?
31. Let us form a society, shall we?
32. Let them read here, will you?
33. Let her take the book, will you?

More about LAY and LIE

The verbs **to lay** and **to lie** are probably the two most confusing verbs in English. Because they are so widely used they are worth paying a little extra attention to.



Present Stem	Past Tense	Past Participle	Present Participle
lay	laid	laid	laying
lie (down)	lay	lain	lying
lie (untruth)	lied	lied	lying



To **"lay"** means to put or place something down. It always takes an object. If you can use the verb **put** in your sentence you need a form of the verb **to lay**.

1. I usually **lay** the keys on the table.
2. Yesterday I **laid** the book on the table.
3. I had just **laid** the book on the table when the phone rang.
4. I'm **laying** the book on the table.

To **"lie"** means to rest, relax, or place oneself in a horizontal position. It does not take an object. If you can use the verb **recline** in your sentence, you need a form of the verb **to lie**.

1. I **lie** on the floor for fifteen minutes every afternoon.
2. Yesterday I **lay** on the floor for fifteen minutes.
3. I have **lain** on the floor for fifteen minutes every afternoon as long as I can remember.
4. I'm **lying** on the floor for fifteen minutes (so don't bother me).

WATCH OUT!

	Common errors	The correct form	Why? (The theory)
1	I bid him to quit the organisation.	I bid him quit the organisation.	The infinitive is used without "to" after verbs like help, watch, bid, dare, hear, let, make, need and see.
2	You need not to worry about us.	You need not worry about us.	
3	She heard her to weep .	She heard her weep .	
4	I agree for helping you out in trouble.	I agree to help you out in trouble.	The following verbs are followed by the infinitive: Agree, arrange, attempt, care, cease, consent, decide, determine, endeavour, fall, forget, hesitate, hope, learn, manage, neglect, prepare, promise, propose, refuse, regret, remember, seem, swear, undertake.
5	There is not alternative but to help him out.	There is no alternative but help him out.	Prepositions "but" and "except" take the infinitive without "to".
6	I would rather to go for batting.	I would rather go for batting.	Expressions "would rather, would sooner, rather than, sooner than and had better" are followed by infinitive without "to".
7	He heard the lion roared .	He heard the lion roaring .	Verbs of sensation like hear, listen, look, observe, perceive, see and smell, and verbs like catch, keep, leave and start are followed by a noun/pronoun + present participle
8	The teacher caught the students napped .	The teacher caught the students napping .	
9	I like my food boiling .	I like my food boiled .	The following verbs are followed by a noun/pronoun + past participle Get (causative), have (causative), like, make, prefer, wish, want, etc.
10	He flew for London at 8 a.m., arriving there twelve hours later. 	He flew for London at 8 a.m., and arrived there twelve hours later.	A present participle should not be used to express an action that is not occurring at the same time as that of the action of the principal verb.

Now you know why that sentence about flying to London is wrong. What about this sentence?

Kumble bowled extremely well, conceding only eight runs in his last four overs.

Can we apply the "London" logic to this sentence and say that Kumble is wrong? **Actually, this sentence is correct.**

Why is London wrong and Kumble right (apart from the fact that he is the first Indian to reach the 500 Test Match Wickets)?



Here we have two parts: Kumble **bowled** extremely well. He **conceded** only eight runs in his last four overs. Now, both these actions are **happening together**. He is **conceding runs while he is bowling**. Whereas our London-bound friend was trying the impossible task of starting for London and arriving there at the same time.

WATCH OUT!			
	Common errors	The correct form	Why? (The theory)
1	Avoid to overwrite as much as possible.	Avoid overwriting as much as possible.	The following verbs are followed by a gerund (ing): Avoid, detest, dislike, enjoy, can't help (in the sense of <i>avoid</i>), keep (in the sense of <i>continue</i>), mind, prevent, risk, stop, accustomed to, fed up with, habituated to, is not good, is no use, is used to, looking forward to, tired of, tired with, with a view to and is worth.
2	I am accustomed to teach students.	I am accustomed to teaching students.	
3	They were to be married last month but had to postpone the wedding until next month.	They were to have been married last month but had to postpone the wedding until next month.	Be is used in the past tense with the perfect infinitive to indicate an arrangement that was "made" but not "carried out".
4	I am sorry for I being late.	I am sorry for my being late.	The noun or pronoun coming before a gerund must be used in possessive case .
5	Nobody can prevent me going there.	Nobody can prevent my going there.	
6	It depends upon your understanding the situation.	It depends upon you understanding the situation.	
7	There is a chance of the milk's turning sour.	There is a chance of the milk turning sour.	If the noun coming before the gerund is a lifeless thing , it should not be used in the possessive case .
8	There is danger of the roof's falling in rains.	There is danger of the roof falling in rains.	
9	I avoid to go there.	I avoid going there.	After the following verbs only a gerund should be used (not an infinitive): Feel, mind, avoid, consider, enjoy, excuse, finish, miss, can't help, look forward, to give up, go on, it is no good and it is no use.
10	We just missed to catch the train.	We just missed catching the train.	

Drunken driver drank more!

There are some past participles which are used as **pure adjectives**, and not as the past participle form of verbs. They are—**drunken, molten, bounden, cloven, graven, stricken, shrunken, sunken and shorn**. They can qualify only a noun, as: a drunken driver, molten lava, bounden duty, cloven foot, graven image, stricken heart, shrunken face, sunken ship and shorn sheep. The normal past participle forms of these are: **Drunk, melted, bound, clove, graved, struck, shrunk, sunk and sheared**.



To "to" or not to "to"?

Infinitive without "to"

The infinitive is used without **"to"** after these verbs: hear, see, feel, make, let, bid, watch, behold, know, notice, observe, need not and dare not.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. He bade me go . (not to go) | 2. We shall watch him dance . (not to dance) |
| 3. Let him sing . (not to sing) | 4. Make him work . (not to work) |
| 5. Behold/see/observe him play . (not to play) | 6. My teacher helped me learn tables fast. (not to help) |

But if the verbs listed above are used **passively**, they will take the infinitive **with "to"**.

1. He was made **to do** it.
2. He was known **to have hidden** the treasure.
3. He was bidden **to go**.
4. He was seen **to be crossing** the river.

Infinitives do not take "to" after these expressions: had better, had rather, would sooner, would rather, sooner than, rather than and had sooner.

1. He **had better resign**.
2. He **would rather withdraw**.
3. I **would sooner resign than serve** in these conditions.
4. I would study **rather than waste** my time.

"To" is not used **with the infinitive after the conjunction "than"**: He is better able to write **than speak**.

"To" is not used with the infinitive after the preposition **"but"**, provided that **but** has **"do"** verb before it.

1. She can **do** nothing **but weep**.
2. We **did** nothing but **play**.

If **"have"** or **"has"** or **"had"** has a **noun** or a **pronoun** after it, the infinitive following will not have "to" with it.

No "to"	With "to"
1. I will have you remember me.	1. There is no book to read .
2. He had him know his fault.	2. I have no time to waste .
3. He will have me forget my insult.	3. He is not a man to be respected .
4. I saw him dance .	4. I have a horse to sell .
5. I bid you go .	5. This book is good to read .
6. I will have you accept your fault.	6. Mangoes are sweet to eat .
	7. I am eager to go .
	8. The weather is pleasant to enjoy .

In such sentences, the infinitive is used only in **active voice**, not in **passive voice**.



Incorrect	Correct
1. The problem is easy to be solved .	1. The problem is easy to solve .
2. He has a horse to be sold .	2. He has a horse to sell .
3. I have a house to be furnished .	3. I have a house to furnish .
4. He is hard to be pleased .	4. He is hard to please .
5. These mangoes are sweet to be eaten .	5. These mangoes are sweet to eat .
6. He is to be blamed .	6. He is to blame .
7. Tea is easy to be prepared .	7. Tea is easy to prepare .
8. He has a point to be made .	8. He has a point to make .

But, in the following cases, the passive voice is followed by "to":

1. **[Correct]: It was not to be found.** (*Possibility*)
2. **[Correct]: The man said, "If I were to give birth to a child, I would bear it in my womb for a year."** (*Hypothesis*)

Some verbs when joined with an **infinitive** show the occurrence of an action. They also carry the sense of sudden occurrence of the action concerned. These verbs are: happen, seem, chance and appear.

1. I **happened to see** a snake.
2. He **seemed to have forgotten** me.
3. I **chanced to meet** him in the market.
4. He **appeared to recognise** me.

Model use of modals

A modal is a verb (like "can", "might" and "must") used with another verb to express an idea or possibility that is not expressed by the main verb of the sentence. You make use of modals everyday. Study the following sentences:

1. **May** I come in, sir?
2. **May** I sit on this chair?
3. You **may** come in. (Permission)
4. You **may** sit on this chair. (Permission)
5. It **may** rain. (Possibility)
6. He **may** be late. (Doubt)
7. It **might** rain. (Very little possibility)
8. He **might** come today.
9. He **might** pass.
10. He **might** change his mind.
11. **Might I** use your pen, please?
12. **Might I** borrow your pen for an hour?
13. **Might I** go now?
14. You **might** go now.
15. **May** you live long! (Wish)
16. **May** God help you! (Wish)
17. I came so early that I **may** find you at home. (Purpose)
18. Work hard so that you **may** pass. (Purpose)
19. He **may** have submitted his application.
20. He **may** have given him some help.
21. The robber **might** have killed him. (He escaped being killed.)
22. He **might** have robbed me.
23. The thief **might** have escaped from the police custody.
24. He said, "My father **may** come today."
25. He said that his father **might** come that day.
26. You **might** pay a little more attention to your studies. (Dissatisfaction)
27. You **might** come a little earlier. (Expectation – a little negative)
28. **Could** you lend me your pen?
29. **Could** you give me a lift by your car?
30. He asked me, "**Can** you help me?"
31. He asked me if **I could** help him.
32. He said, "**I cannot** go there."
33. He said that he **could** not go there.
34. He **could have passed** the examination. (But he did not.)
35. You **could have reached** in time. (But did not.)
36. He **could have avoided** the accident.
37. **Shall I** lock the gate? (i.e. Do I have your permission to lock the gate?)
38. **Shall I** bring my father tomorrow? (i.e. Do I have your permission to bring my father tomorrow?)
39. **Shall** he be allowed to go? (i.e. Does he have your permission to go?)
40. **Will** you have tea with me?
41. **Will** you lend me your pen for a minute?
42. **Will** you not support me?
43. **Would** you have tea with me?
44. **Wouldn't/won't** you have tea with me?
45. **Would you mind** having tea with me? (Remember that "would" shows more courtesy.)
46. He **will** only talk about his sons. (Habit)
47. He **will** play upon his guitar till midnight. (Habit)
48. The train **will have crossed** Allahabad.
49. He **will have left** the office by now.
50. If he had worked a little harder, he **would have secured** first division.
51. Had he come a few days earlier, he **would have seen** his mother.
52. He **would** often spend his evenings in the club.
53. He **would** often go for swimming. (Used to)
54. **I would rather** remain at home. (Used to)
55. **I would rather** break than bend.
56. **I would sooner** give up my claim.
57. **Should** you come in time, I would give you a prize. (If)
58. **Should I** seek his help, he would certainly help me. (If)
59. **I would like** to know your future plan.
60. He **would like** to know your future plan.
61. **I would prefer** to travel by bus.
62. He **would be glad** to meet you.
63. **I would be inclined to** go with you.
64. **I wish** you **would** not refuse me.
65. **I wish** you **would** study science. **Note**—After "wish" we do not use "will".
66. You must come to office at 10 o'clock.
67. You **mustn't** jump out from a moving train.
68. This book **must** be very popular.
69. We **must** love our country.
70. We **must** be kind to the poor.
71. You **must** drive cautiously.
72. You **must** avoid strong drinks.
73. He laboured very hard. He **must have** secured first division.
74. He started very early. He **must have** caught the train.
75. He talks very proudly. He **must be** an arrogant person.
76. He spoke very fluently. He **must have been** an orator.

DESSERTS: YUM-YUM!

A few transitive verbs like **eat, read, smell, taste** etc, even in an activity form, are sometimes used in a passive sense.

Incorrect: The mangoes *are tasted* sour.

It is true that the mangoes *are tasted*. Mangoes do not *taste*. Yet the above sentence would imply that The mangoes *are tasted when they are sour*. Like "Some vegetables are eaten raw." means "Some vegetables are eaten in their raw state *or* when they are raw.") But common knowledge tells us that people in general prefer sweet mangoes. What the writer intends is the meaning The mangoes *are sour when tasted*. This comes out in the following sentence.

Correct: The mangoes **taste** sour.

Incorrect : This fruit **is smelt** sweet.

This would mean that this fruit is smelt when it is sweet. Do you know of any such fruit bound by such convention? What the writer intends to say is that this fruit is sweet when smelt, So,

Correct: This fruit **smells** sweet.



Exercise

Let's check your command of verbs. Pick the right form of the verb from the brackets.

1. I (lay, laid) the baby in his crib half an hour ago.
2. I have been (lying, laying) down too much lately.
3. He had just (lain, laid) his head on the desk for ten minutes.
4. Either of the two professors (make, makes) a good mentor in physics.
5. Neither the stallion nor the two mares (likes, like) being saddled.
6. In our college, economics (attract, attracts) more students than ever.
7. Yesterday, without warning, one of the pipes in the building (burst, bursted).
8. Esha, along with her cousin, (organise, organises) the music festival every year.
9. He (wrote, had written) his wife a letter once a week, whether he was on the road or at home.

Answers

1. laid 2. lying 3. laid 4. makes 5. like 6. attracts 7. burst 8. organises 9. wrote.