Verbs

A *verb* expresses action or a state of being.
Verbs are classified in 3 ways:

- As helping or main verbs
- As action or linking verbs
- As transitive or intransitive verbs
1. Main Verbs and Helping Verbs

A helping verb may be separated from the main verb.

A verb phrase consists of one main verb and one or more helping verbs.
Examples

- I am reading *Gulliver’s Travels*.

- We *should have been listening* instead of talking.

- Did she *paint* the house?
## Commonly Used Helping Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of BE</th>
<th>A <em>modal</em> is an auxiliary verb that is used to express an attitude toward the action or state of being of the main verb.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of HAVE</td>
<td><strong>MODALS</strong> can, could, may, might, must, ought, shall, should, will, would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have, having, has, had</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of DO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do, does, did</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Not and the contraction of n’t are never part of a verb phrase

Instead, they are adverbs telling to what extent.

We did not hear you.
We didn’t hear you.
2. Action Verbs and Linking Verbs

An *action verb* expresses either physical or mental activity.

A *linking verb* connects the subject to a word or word group that identifies or describes the subject. Such a word group is called a *subject complement*. 
### Commonly Used Linking Verbs

#### Forms of Be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>be</th>
<th>were</th>
<th>shall have been</th>
<th>should be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>being</td>
<td>shall be</td>
<td>will have been</td>
<td>would be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am</td>
<td>will be</td>
<td>can be</td>
<td>could be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>has been</td>
<td>may be</td>
<td>should have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are</td>
<td>have been</td>
<td>might be</td>
<td>would have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was</td>
<td>had been</td>
<td>must be</td>
<td>could have been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Other Linking Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>appear</th>
<th>feel</th>
<th>look</th>
<th>seem</th>
<th>sound</th>
<th>taste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>become</td>
<td>grow</td>
<td>remain</td>
<td>smell</td>
<td>stay</td>
<td>turn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depending on how these words are used in a sentence, they can be classified as linking or action verbs.
Determination of a Linking Verb

To figure out if a verb is linking or action, substitute a form of the verb BE - the most common is *was*. If the sentence makes sense, the verb is most likely a linking verb. If the sentence doesn’t make sense, the verb is an action verb.

**Felt** is the past form of feels which is on the linking/action verb list.

**Example of Linking:**

Joe felt calm at the seashore. - Replace the verb *felt* with *was* to see if the sentence makes sense:

Joe *was* calm at the seashore. - The sentence makes sense, so the verb is classified as a linking verb.

**Example of Action:**

Joe felt the waving strands of kelp. - Replace the verb *felt* with *was* to see if the sentence makes sense:

Joe *was* the waving strands of kelp. - The sentence doesn’t make sense, so the verb is classified as an action verb.
The author wrote.

The author wrote a book.
Direct Object

Only with an action verb can you have a direct object!
Two key questions to ask yourself when finding the direct object:
*Who* receives the action of the verb?
*What* receives the action of the verb?
If you have an answer, you have a direct object.
Direct object = T / No direct object = I
3. Transitive Verbs

A *transitive verb* has a *direct object* – a word that tells *who* or *what* receives the action of the verb.

**Only action verbs have direct objects!**

Some sentences may have more than one *direct object*; in this case, the sentence is said to have a *compound direct object*. 
Transitive Examples

She **trusts** her friend.
Who does she trust? = *friend* = direct object.

Maya Angelou **wrote** essays.
What did Maya Angelou write? = *essays* = direct object.
Intransitive Verbs

An *intransitive verb* does not have a direct object.
Intransitive Examples

The audience **applauded**.

The train **stops** here.

*(Here tells *where* it stopped; therefore, *here* is an adverb.)*
The same verb may be transitive in one sentence and intransitive in another.

**Examples:**

**Transitive:**
Elsa *swam* the channel.

What did Elsa swim? = *channel* = direct object.

**Intransitive:**
Elsa *swam* for many hours.

(for many hours) is a prep phrase; therefore, there is no direct object.
Action Verbs can be transitive or intransitive.

All Linking Verbs are intransitive.
A verb phrase may be classified as transitive or intransitive and as Action or Linking
Not sure?

Check your dictionary! Most dictionaries group the definitions of verbs according to whether the verbs are used transitively (v.t.) or intransitively (v.i.).